

**Britain's First Cat retires from politics**

LONDON (AFP) — In a first high-profile retirement from the heart of Downing Street, a cat named Humphrey has retired from politics on Monday.

Downing Street cat Humphrey, a 14-year-old tabby, has been a fixture in the prime minister's office since 1992. He has seen world leaders come and go from his home in central London. In a colourful career as Britain's first cat, he has been a constant presence in the prime minister's office. Humphrey has been a constant presence in the prime minister's office. Humphrey has been a constant presence in the prime minister's office.

**Volunteers hope Pope will unveil drinks can church replica**

ROME (AP) — A group of Italian youth workers and volunteers are hoping to see the Pope unveil a replica of a church made from discarded cans. The group, called "CanChurch," has been working on the project for several months. They hope to complete the replica by the time of the Pope's visit to Rome in June 1998.

**105-year-old sure of a clean sweep in athletics meet**

Man admits to filming up thousands of skirts

Man admits to filming up thousands of skirts

### Regent sends cable to Assad

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, on Saturday sent a cable to Syrian President Hafez Al Assad congratulating him in his name and on behalf of the Jordanian people on the anniversary of the Syrian president's birth. Prince Hassan wished the Syrian president good health and a happy life and the Syrian people further progress and development.



# Jordan Times

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## Aziz says Iraq's weapons of mass destruction no longer operational

### Arab League offers to mediate between Iraq, U.N.

**Combined agency dispatches**

IRAQI DEPUTY Prime Minister Tariq Aziz, on a stopover in Paris, said Saturday that Baghdad's weapons of mass destruction are no longer operational.

Speaking on France 2 Television, Mr. Aziz said U.S. accusations to the contrary were only intended to keep international sanctions against Iraq in place.

"If you had production [of weapons of mass destruction] before 1991, do you think that the chemicals would still be active after seven years," he said.

"The Americans are making these accusations to block the lifting of sanctions," he added, according to the French-language translation of his remarks.

Mr. Aziz arrived in the French capital on Friday by Concord from New York. Referring to Baghdad's expulsion of U.S. members of a U.N. arms inspection team this past week, Mr. Aziz said the issue of Iraqi firepower "cannot be decided by American policemen using Sherlock Holmes methods."

Arab League Secretary General Esmat Meguid said Mr. Aziz's deputy prime minister in Cairo Wednesday to seek to ease tensions between Baghdad and the United Nations, a news report said.

### Majali tells MPs Jordan's 'position on Iraq dictated by national duty'

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan fears that the U.S. will react to Baghdad's expulsion of American nationals in the U.N. inspection teams by attacking Iraq.

Newly-elected deputies who were briefed by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali yesterday quoted the premier as saying that in case Iraq was attacked that would lead to "dangerous repercussions for Jordan."

"Our position on Iraq is dictated by our national duty," Dr. Majali said adding "we cannot just sit and watch."

Dr. Majali held separate meetings with the newly-elected Lower House and the Senate at Parliament yesterday.

According to the parliamentarians, who did not wish to be identified, the prime minister described Iraq's expulsion of the U.S. inspectors as being a "difficult move."

He said that all indications so far is that neither the U.S. nor the U.N. would tolerate the Iraqi move.

Dr. Majali said that Jordan has always been told that sanctions against Iraq would be lifted if that country abided by the U.N. Security Council resolutions imposed after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990.

The aim of the international community should be limited to enforcing the council resolutions, Dr. Majali said.

He said that Jordan stands firmly on the side of the Iraqi people and is exerting all possible efforts to contain the present crisis (See related story on page 3).

Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Fayez Tarawneh on Saturday called his Egyptian counterpart Amr Musa and exchanged views on the current Iraqi-U.N. crisis and efforts exerted to alleviate the suffering of the Iraqi people. Also discussed were the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations and the faltering peace process.

"We must negotiate even if it needs patience. Bombs don't do any good," Mr. Abdel Meguid said "peace can still be saved by serious diplomatic efforts."

He would not rule out going to Baghdad on a peace mission but added that the current crisis was unlike the pre-Gulf war period after Iraqi troops had overrun Kuwait and the Arab League backed military action against Baghdad.

Mr. Abdul Meguid also called for all U.N. sanctions against Iraq, Libya and Sudan to be lifted.

The embargo deprives the Iraqi government of 90 per cent of its hard-currency revenue, preventing it from feeding and healing a population that depends on a large extent on state subsidies to survive.

"Nearly one million children suffer from stunted growth because of chronic malnutrition," said Eric Falt, spokesman for U.N. humanitarian activities in Baghdad. "Several generations will be affected," he added (see story on page 12).

## Albright heads to Gulf to discuss Iraq crisis, attend MENA

DOHA (R) — U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright holds crucial talks with key Gulf Arab allies on the Iraq crisis on Sunday as military reinforcements rushed to the region to harden pressure on President Saddam Hussein.

Ms. Albright's hastily rearranged her Gulf trip follows separate meetings in Europe with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat aimed at rescuing the stalled Middle East peace process.

Her spokesman James Rubin told reporters in the Swiss capital of Bern that Ms. Albright would visit Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Bahrain in addition to her previously scheduled journey to Qatar to attend the opening of a Middle East economic conference.

"The reason for these stops is that those are the countries that are the frontline states. They are the countries that face the greatest risk of President Saddam Hussein's continuing to threaten his neighbors and maintaining an ability of weapons of mass destruction," he said.

Ms. Albright said at a news conference in Bern after talks with Mr. Arafat that she would consult on the threat posed by President Hussein but added: "I'm not going to be discussing deployment or defense issues."

Gulf analysts had speculated that Ms. Albright would seek support for possible military strikes against Iraq, whose ban on Americans in U.N. arms inspection teams sparked the latest Gulf crisis.

The analysts said few Arab states — even those who joined the U.S.-led military coalition to eject Iraqi occupation forces from Kuwait in the 1991 Gulf war — had any stomach for a strike against Baghdad.

U.S. cruise missile attacks on Iraq last year failed to gain much Arab support and Saudi Arabia refused to provide a launch-pad for U.S. forces.

Most Gulf Arab states were opposed to any new pre-emptive strike against Iraq, a Gulf Arab official said, and this was enabling Saddam to play Arab doubts to his advantage.

A second U.S. aircraft carrier battle group was rushing to the tense region to reinforce 17 American warships and 200 warplanes already within striking range of Baghdad.

With U.S. Middle East policy in crisis, Ms. Albright was due to spend a few hours in the tiny Gulf Arab state of Qatar at the start of a controversial economic conference that has split the Arab World.

Iraq was not invited to the conference but Baghdad's ambassador in Doha Anwar Abdul Razak on Saturday portrayed the standoff with the United States as a conspiracy against Arabs.

"This is a siege against the entire Arab World, not just Iraq. It requires a united Arab stand," he told Reuters.

The Iraqi diplomat urged Gulf Arab states to "not allow the United States to use their waters, their land and their airspace to kill the Iraqi people."

## Albright ends inconclusive talks with Arafat, Netanyahu

BERNE (R) — U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, who has been emphasizing the urgent need for concrete results on Middle East peace efforts, ended two days of inconclusive meetings with Israeli and Palestinian leaders.

After separate talks with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, she said, she was persuaded her message that "there is a need to get moving" seems to have been received by both men.

But there was no announcement of specific progress. U.S. officials had earlier said no breakthrough was expected.

Ms. Albright, at a news conference after a two-hour meeting with Mr. Arafat, said she "sees some openings" in the Israeli and Palestinian positions and thinks it will be possible in the next few weeks to see "a continuing process of closing the gaps and widening the openings."

"While remain very realistic about what can be accomplished, do think that these two sets of talks have been useful and provide the basis for further discussion," she added. She had met Mr. Netanyahu in London on Friday. Ms. Albright refused to elaborate on the "openings."

A senior U.S. official who briefed reporters said there were some "signs of limited convergence" between the two parties. But he acknowledged "the gaps that separate them are still quite real. It will take some hard decisions."

Mr. Arafat reaffirmed that Palestinians are "strategically committed to the peace process" and stressed the importance of Ms. Albright's efforts to push it forward.

Ms. Albright made the special stops in London and Bern to warn the two leaders "time is running out" on the peace process. Israeli-Palestinian negotiations were stalled for eight months before resuming in October.

U.S. officials are concerned the failure of Israeli-Palestinian talks to progress is weakening Washington's attempts to hold together the 1991 Gulf war coalition of Arab and Western states at a time when Iraqi President Saddam Hussein is posing a fresh challenge.

Ms. Albright made this point publicly and bluntly to Mr. Netanyahu and Mr. Arafat.

## MENA conference opens today amidst political controversy

**By Hind-Lara Mango**  
*Special to the Jordan Times*

DOHA — Amid much controversy, the Doha Middle East and North Africa (MENA) conference convenes today with the participation of a top level delegation from Jordan headed by Deputy Prime Minister for Development Affairs and Minister of State for Prime Ministry Affairs Jawad Anani.

Qatari Emir Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani will open the conference under the theme, "Creating a new private/public partnership for trade and economic growth beyond the year 2000," this morning.

Despite a boycott by most Arab governments, the interest of the Arab and international business community has been noticeable. Political delegations from 54 countries are taking part in the event bringing the overall number of participants to 2,000 people for this three-day event. "Business executives from nearly all the MENA countries are present... representing over one third of the total number of participants," said one of the directors of the World Economic Forum organizing this event. These countries include Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Israel, Morocco, Egypt, Oman, the Palestinian National Authority, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Tunisia, Yemen and Qatar.

Thematic sessions as well as business strategy study and project presentations will take place in parallel. The first theme to be discussed today is policies and reforms needed to create an investor friendly environment. Under this heading better governmental management of the economy will be debated.

Minister of Trade, Industry and Supply Hani Mulki will speak at these deliberations. Questions raised pertain to the role of the private vis-a-vis the public sector, and the role of government in ensuring the provision of an investment environment.

Another issue that will be analysed is whether the American and European models of economic growth are exportable, and what the MENA region could learn from policies targeting economic growth and low inflation.

Also participating at this session is John Page, World Bank chief economist for the Middle East and North Africa, and Natan Sharansky, the minister of trade and industry of Israel.

According to World Economic Forum officials over 800 business leaders from around 60 countries are attending this event.

Also to be discussed during the conference is global climate change and regional and international efforts in combating the build-up of carbon dioxide emission levels.

Boulos Kefaya, a senior official at the Ministry of Planning along with members from international energy and environmental agencies in Qatar, France, Kenya and Finland will discuss carbon dioxide emission-control plans, and how industrialized and developing economies can share the responsibilities in ensuring emission controls.

Employment, training and skills will be the subjects of talks for the "MENA manager-executive of the 21st century" theme dealing with responses to changing needs and market demands for training and education. Talib Rifai, the deputy director general of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), will moderate a discussion focusing on how technology could play a role in improving managerial capacity, labour cooperation for the development of a productive workforce.

Jordanian participation is evident in the water management theme where Hazim Al Nasser, senior advisor to the minister of water and irrigation, will speak and Michel Marto, director general of the Securities and Exchange Commission, will be involved in the business strategy study.

**Professionals call for MENA boycott**

AMMAN (AFP) — Jordan's Council of Professional Associations called Saturday for a Jordanian boycott of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economic conference in Qatar. In a statement entitled "Doha conference not an Arab option," the council said: "We call on our government and economic sector to boycott this conference" which is due to begin today in the Qatari capital. The statement, describing Israel as "the Zionist enemy," said the conference constitutes a plan to impose American-Israeli supremacy over the Arab Nation.

## Left set for leading role in new Moroccan government

RABAT (AFP) — Opposition left-wing parties made big gains in Morocco's parliamentary elections, results showed Saturday, and are well-positioned to play a leading role in a new coalition government.

The elections, which for the first time since independence in 1956 saw all the country's deputies directly elected by universal suffrage, resulted in no party or grouping being able to command an absolute majority of 162.

Of the 325 seats in the Chamber of Representatives, 102 went to the Koutla left-wing opposition bloc, 100 to the right-wing Wafak bloc, 97 to the centre-right, and 26 to a basket of minor parties.

On the basis of the results, King Hassan II is to appoint a prime minister to form a new government.

Voter turnout was 58.30 per cent, against 62.75 per cent in the June 1993 legislative elections.

Within the Koutla grouping, the dominant Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP) jumped from 48 seats to 57 and, according to observers, would likely be a major component of a majority coalition.

The other main opposition grouping, the nationalist Istiqlal of former Foreign Affairs Minister Mohammed Boucetta, which usually runs neck-and-neck with the USFP, could only manage 32 seats, down from 43.

For the first time in Moroccan history the Islamist Popular Constitutional Democratic Movement (MPCD) will be represented in parliament with nine seats.

The main legislative line-up after the final results was USFP (57) the right-wing Constitutional Union (50), the centrist National Rally of Independents (46), the right-wing People's Movement (40), and the Berber centre-right Democratic and Social Movement, and Istiqlal (26 a 32).

Voters chose from among 3,319 candidates representing 16 parties.

For more than three decades, King Hassan II has run a constitutional monarchy in Morocco where the role of parliament has habitually been a low-key one.

But constitutional reforms have opened the way for a bicameral assembly and broadened out the political playing field.

Friday's poll will be followed on Dec. 5 by the indirect election of a new 275-member Chamber of Councilors, or senate, through an electoral college comprising town councils, regional assemblies, chambers of commerce, industry and agriculture and trade unions.

The new system was laid down in a constitutional reform adopted in September 1996, transforming the legislature of 333 members to a two-house body.

The reform was billed as a catalyst for greater honesty and transparency in future elections.

However, despite the novelty of universal suffrage, campaigning for the elections was lacklustre and devoid of intense debate in a country whose main crises are high unemployment, a failing educational system and a weak economy.

### Palestinians mark declaration of independence



Palestinian children arrive to attend a celebration to mark the ninth anniversary of Palestinian declaration of independence Saturday (Reuters photo)

HEBRON (AFP) — Thousands of Palestinians celebrated Saturday the ninth anniversary of President Yasser Arafat's declaration of independence with marches and anti-Israeli demonstrations throughout the territories.

"No peace without Jerusalem" and "No peace with settlements" read colourful banners hung in the West Bank city of Hebron where some 6,000 Palestinians including ministers and security chiefs gathered.

The annual observance comes after President Arafat on Thursday said he would proclaim an independent Palestinian state in May 1999 at the end of the five-year period outlined in interim peace



# Iraqis calmly prepare for U.S. attack

BAGHDAD (AFP) — With streams of volunteers heading off for military training, queues forming outside petrol stations and civilians camped out as human shields in factories, Iraqis prepared calmly Saturday for any U.S. attack.

The main sign of Iraqi preparations was the steady flow of hundreds of volunteers towards the training camps of the "Saddam Fedayeen," the militia commanded by Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's elder son, Uday.

Youth TV, the television station run by Uday, has broadcast daily appeals for volunteers to head off to the camps.

And, not to be beaten by Foreign Minister Mohammad Said Al Sahhaf who has said 25 of his diplomats are signing up. Uday's paper Babel on Saturday published a list of trade ministry civil servants it said had volunteered.

Nearly 1,000 Iraqi women and children have been camped out since Monday at a presidential palace and another building used for government meetings to act as human shields against any U.S. military strike.

Several more sites in Baghdad and other cities have now been opened up to civilians wanting to act as shields.

Mr. Sahhaf did not specify whether the sites concerned were weapons factories when he announced the move Friday and journalists could not visit them Saturday to check for themselves.

Before dawn Saturday long queues had formed outside petrol stations, despite assurances from the Iraqi oil ministry that "people's fuel needs will be guaranteed."

The ministry decided Friday evening to ration fuel to the owners of private cars. From now Iraqis can only buy 40 litres of petrol every four days and only on presentation of a ration card.

Even before the announcement of rationing, long queues had become a regular sight here over the last

few days.

Residents of the capital have also been buying up kerosene lamps in large numbers for fear the power supply will be cut. But there was no rush on basic commodities as there was in the lead-up to the 1991 Gulf War. In the city's main markets business went on as normal.

The official press played down Saturday the likely impact of any U.S. air strike — virtually the sole topic of conversation here for some days now.

"Every month 20,000 Iraqis die from the effects of the embargo. One or two attacks, or even 10 of them, are hardly going to mean anything," the daily Al Jumhuriyah said to reassure a people bled dry by more than seven years of embargo.

"For various reasons America is totally incapable of launching a land war against Iraq, so it will only be able to launch an air or missile attack," the newspaper said.

"That would of course mean some damage in particular places but it would not threaten Iraq."

The newspaper urged its readers to prepare themselves for sacrifices "for one, two or three months after which the outcome will inevitably be the lifting of the embargo under Arab and international pressure."

In a move calculated to further increase tension, Babel called on Arab pro-Iraqi groups to attack U.S. and British interests around the Arab World to express their support for Iraq.

Even though they expect a U.S. strike, the residents of the capital are carrying on with celebrations for "Baghdad Day," marking the anniversary of the city's foundation.

The festivities reached their climax in a public square Saturday evening. Hundreds of students and theatre and dance troupes put on a show illustrating episodes from the history of Baghdad over more than 12 centuries.



A poor Iraqi man sits beside his ration food in downtown Baghdad Saturday as many Iraqis visited the market to stockpile food in the event of a U.S. military attack. Iraq reiterated on Saturday that it would try to shoot down a U.S. spy plane expected to fly over the country on behalf of United Nations arms inspectors (Reuters photo)

## Iraqi daily urge attacks on U.S. British targets

BAGHDAD (R) — An Iraqi newspaper owned by the son of President Saddam Hussein on Saturday urged Arabs to attack American and British targets in the region to show solidarity with Baghdad in its 18-day standoff with the U.N. over arms inspectors.

"American and British interests, embassies and naval ships... in the Arab region should be the targets of military operations and fedayeen [commando] attacks by Arab political forces," Babel daily, owned by President Saddam's eldest son Uday, said in a front-page editorial.

Babel, although widely influential, does not always carry the official government line.

Government newspapers said on Saturday no military action against Iraq would force Baghdad to rescind its decision to ban Americans from U.N. arms inspections.

"One aggression, two or even 10 means nothing but more sacrifices [by the people] equal to those of one, two or three months caused by the unjust embargo," Al Jumhuriyah daily said in a front-page editorial.

The paper said the military "option will only cause destruction in certain parts of Iraq but it would not be able to change the current situation or change the firm facts."

The defiant tone came a day after President Bill Clinton ordered a second U.S. aircraft carrier and its battle group to move within striking distance of Iraq as diplomatic options to resolve the 18-day crisis dwindled.

The aircraft carrier George Washington, sailing from the Mediterranean to join the carrier Nimitz, would ratchet up the military threat to Iraq as U.S. diplomats sought peaceful ways to make Baghdad back down on U.N. inspections, President Clinton said.

U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright would make an unscheduled stop in Saudi Arabia on Sunday to consult about the crisis over Iraq, her spokesman said on Saturday.

Spokesman James Rubin told reporters in Switzerland that Ms. Albright would visit the Kingdom after attending a Middle East economic conference in Doha, Qatar, on Sunday. He gave no further details.

Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz was closeted with aids in a Paris hotel on Saturday, but his plans were unclear.

Aides said Mr. Aziz had "no schedule" for the day in the French capital.

A French foreign ministry spokeswoman said Mr. Aziz had not received any talks with ministry officials, but his stay in Paris was regarded as a "technical stopover."

Mr. Aziz flew to Paris Friday night from the U.N. and had been expected to go on to Cairo later on Saturday to defend Baghdad's stance in a row over U.N. arms inspections.

Al Jumhuriyah said in another editorial that U.N. chief arms inspector Richard Butler was trying to escalate tension in order to prepare the ground for a military strike against Iraq.

U.N. weapons inspectors pulled out of Baghdad Friday after Iraq expelled six American monitors, whom Baghdad had accused of deliberately causing friction.

"Butler's decision to pull out no means nothing but more sacrifices," American inspectors has assured, without any doubt, that he is trying to escalate the crisis instead of cooling it down," the paper said.

Security Council members criticised Mr. Butler Thursday night for pulling all the teams without first consulting them. Mr. Butler said he had had no choice, otherwise Iraq would have had its way.

Foreign Minister Saeed Al Sahhaf said Friday Iraq was not seeking military confrontation.

"We are requesting that our grievances... be heard, be discussed and a serious dialogue be opened in order to get rid of the current situation of sanctions imposed on Iraq for more than seven years," he told a news conference.

Al Qadissiya daily dismissed as baseless what it called U.S. allegations that Iraq was hiding prohibited weapons in presidential palaces.

Several hundred Iraqis have flocked over the last few days to presidential palaces to act as human shields against any U.S. military attack.

Mr. Sahhaf said that Iraqis were also volunteering to act as human shields for factories and government establishments in and around Baghdad.

Shopkeeper Hassan Abdullamir told Reuters Saturday: "We have built these factories with our blood... we are ready to defend them against the enemies."

Retired teacher Mohammed Al Zubaidi echoed the sentiment.

## Jordanian press warns of military strike on Iraq after regional forum

AMMAN (AFP) — Jordan's press warned Saturday that a military strike on Iraq was likely to come after the Middle East and North Africa economic conference in Qatar.

The Middle East and North Africa conference in Doha runs from Sunday to Tuesday, but has been boycotted by several Arab nations.

"Observers expect [military strikes] will begin after the closing ceremony of the Doha economic conference which the United States has given a high level of interest," said

another Arabic newspaper, Al Dustour.

Both papers were critical of the roles played by the U.S. and Britain as the standoff between Iraq and the United Nations deteriorates following Baghdad's expulsion of U.S. weapons inspectors.

"Iraq's crisis is ostensibly with the U.N., but at the heart

of the matter it is with the U.S. and it will quickly intensify, leading in the end... to an armed attack which will result in the reconstruction of what the Iraqis have built during seven years of harsh international sanctions," Al Ra'i said.

For its part, Al Dustour said "the Iraqi crisis has gone

beyond the bounds of reason, logic and custom amid regional and international silence and weakness."

King Hussein met U.S. President Bill Clinton Friday for "very good, detailed discussions" about the crisis with Iraq as well as the general situation in the Middle East.

## ' Hamas official not kidnapped by Israel'

GAZA CITY (AFP) — The Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) announced Friday that a member supposedly kidnapped by Israel was free and well and was no longer sought by the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), a Hamas spokesman said.

"Ibrahim Makadmeh is back home, and we have resolved his problems with the Palestinian Authority and deny he was kidnapped by Israel," Hamas spokesman Abdul Aziz Rantissi said in a statement. "He was in hiding but has answered a Hamas call to come out," Mr. Rantissi added.

Mr. Makadmeh is wanted by Israel for involvement in Hamas attacks that have killed scores of Israelis. The PNA had previously sought to arrest him, alleging he called for attacks against Israel.

Mr. Rantissi said that Mr. Makadmeh had met with senior Palestinian police officials to work out a deal. The spokesman said he had called last month for Mr. Makadmeh to come out of hiding.

Earlier Friday, a Palestinian security official said that Israeli soldiers seized two Hamas militants detained by Palestinian security services while they were being trans-

ferred between two autonomous West Bank towns.

An Israeli military spokesman said that Abdul Rahman Ghanimat and Jamal Hour were picked up at an Israeli roadblock Thursday night near the Palestinian-ruled town of Nablus.

The Palestinian security official said the two Hamas militants had been held for several months in the West Bank city of Hebron and were in the process of being transferred to Nablus jail when they were seized.

The PNA systematically rejects requests from Israel to hand over militants in its cus-

tody, but Israel continues to demand their extradition.

The two militants from the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) are suspected of involvement in six anti-Israeli attacks between 1995 and 1997 which left 11 Israelis dead.

They belong to a Hamas cell in the village of Sourif near Hebron which has been accused of carrying out a suicide bombing in a Tel Aviv cafe in March which left three Israelis dead, and the kidnapping and murder of an Israeli soldier last year.

Four Hamas activists from Sourif are already in Israeli custody.

## Moroccan Islamists say will not join coalition

RABAT (R) — A Moroccan Islamist leader, whose movement made a significant breakthrough in the legislative elections, said on Saturday his elected members would not participate in an expected coalition government.

Abdullah Benkirane's Islamist movement, Al Tawhid Wal Islah (Unity and Reform), which stands under the umbrella of Abdulkrim Khatib's Democratic and Constitutional Popular Movement (MPDC) won nine seats out of a total 325, the interior ministry said.

It will be the first time

moderate Islamists will have a voice in parliament.

"At this stage, we are not interested in government seats... we will not participate in an expected government coalition," Mr. Benkirane told Reuters in an interview.

"What we plan to do is... to ensure an active presence in the parliament, insist on the Islamic and religious dimension to solve Moroccan society's problems and call for clean and transparent management of the administration," Mr. Benkirane said.

He noted that the Friday polls registered "several irregularities including the use of dirty money and negative neutrality of the authorities to stop fraud."

He said, the MPDC won 10 seats and not nine seats as was earlier announced by the interior ministry.

Interior Minister Driss Basri on Friday night told reporters, "the legislative

elections took place in total transparency, peace and without problems."

King Hassan — who does not vote in parliamentary elections — had demanded maximum efforts to eliminate fraud, saying he was "fed up" with allegations which tarnished Morocco's image.

But the opposition USFP party, in a statement faxed to Reuters, claimed it had recorded 1,072 cases of fraud during the electoral campaign, including intervention of local authorities, activists threatening voters and vote-buying (see story on page 1).

### JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

#### PROGRAMME TWO

14:10 Little Rosey  
14:30 Jonny Quest  
14:50 The Magic School Bus  
15:00 Energy Express  
15:30 American Chart Show  
16:30 Tarzan  
17:00 French Programmes  
19:00 News in French  
19:30 News Headlines  
19:35 Fresh Prince of Bel-Air  
20:00 Cinema, Cinema, Cinema  
20:30 Hot Shots  
21:10 Renegade  
22:00 News in English  
22:30 The Bourne Identity  
23:15 The Jewel in the Crown

#### PRAYER TIMES

04:40 Fair  
06:00 (Sunrise) Duha  
11:20 Dhuhur  
14:16 Asr  
16:40 Maghreb  
18:00 Isha

#### CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church  
Swaffield Tel. 810740  
Assemblies of God Church Tel.  
632785  
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590

### CHURCH OF THE ANNUNCIATION

Tel. 637440

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757

Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366

Anglican Church Tel. 652826

Armenian Catholic Church Tel.  
771331

Armenian Orthodox Church  
Tel. 775261

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751

Armenian International Church  
Tel. 5516245

Evangelical Lutheran Church  
Tel. 824328

German-speaking Evangelical  
Congregation Tel. 688404

The Latter-Day Saints Tel.  
654932

Church of Nazareth Tel.  
675691

The Evangelical Local Church  
in Amman Tel. 811295

English-speaking  
Latin Catholics Parish Tel.  
614190

seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.

Amman 23, Aqaba 29 Humidity

readings: Amman 34 per cent,

Aqaba 26 per cent.

#### WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology  
Fine and sunny weather conditions  
will prevail with winds southeasterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds  
will be northerly moderate and

## JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

### USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

#### NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Issam Al Asmar 890504

Dr. Khalid Klob 816715

Dr. Nidal As'ad 751672

Dr. Abdul Rahim Mustafa 744685

Firas pharmacy 661912

Ferdows pharmacy 778336

Al Asena pharmacy 637055

Naioukh pharmacy 623672

Al Salam pharmacy 636730

Yacoub pharmacy 644945

Shmeisani pharmacy 637660

Najib pharmacy 847632

IRBID:

Dr. Ghazi Ta'anneh 250080

Al Quds pharmacy (—)

### ZARQA:

Dr. Nabil Saffarian 901323

Khalifeh pharmacy 98541

### EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111

Civil Defence Department 661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341

Civil Defence Emergency 199

Rescue Police 192 621111 637777

Fire Brigade 617101

Blood Bank 775121

Highway Police 843402

Traffic Police 896390

Public Security Dept. 630321

Hotel Complaints 605800

Price Complaints 661176

Water & Sewage Complaints 897467

Amman Municipality Complaints 787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121

Overseas Calls 010230

Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101

Abdali Tel. Repairs 661101

Jordan Television 773111

Radio Jordan 774111

Water Authority 680100

J. Electricity Authority 813615

Electric Power Co. 656381

RJ Flight Information 08-53200

Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

### HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32

Khalid Maternity 644381/6

Akileh Maternity 642441/2

Jabal Amman Maternity 642362

Malhas, J. Amman 636140

Palestine, Shmeisani 607071

Shmeisani Hospital 669131

University Hospital 845845

Al-Muasher Hospital 667227/9

The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37

Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6

Italian, Al-Muhajreen 77101/3

Al-Bashir 775111/26

Army, Marka 891611/15

Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50

Amal Hospital 674155

The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 865199

ZARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital

Zarqa National Hospital

Al Sina Hospital 09900560

Al Hikma Modern Hospital 09990990

IRBID:

Princess Basma Hospital

Greek Catholic Hospital

02/275555

02/272275

### FOR THE TRAVELLER

#### QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200-5, where it should always be verified. Information on other flights can be supplied on phone 08 (52700)

ibn Al Nafees Hospital

02/247100

AQABA:

Princess Haya Hospital

(03)514111

17:45 London (RJ)

18:05 Athens (RJ)

18:45 Paris, Geneva (RJ)

19:40 Vienna (RJ)

20:05 Rome (RJ)

00:05 Cairo (RJ)

Other Flights

03:25 Rome (AZ)

10:00 Sanaa (Y)

12:25 Bahrain (GF)

13:00 Moscow (SU)

15:00 Doha (QR)

17:45 Jeddah (SV)



# Home News



MINISTER RECEIVES DELEGATION FROM FLORIDA: Minister of Telecommunications and Transport Basam Saket Saturday receives a delegation of local deputies from the state of Florida in the U.S. Dr. Saket and the delegation members discussed cooperation between Jordan and Florida in various fields (Petra photo)

## Police continuing search for four suspects in robbery of students

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Police are searching for four suspects who robbed eight university students last week in Al Rashid suburb of Amman, according to official sources.

"We have a good description of the four suspects and we are hoping that within the next 48 hours they will be in custody," a police official told the Jordan Times Saturday.

The four suspects, who are believed to be in their late 20s or early 30s, are described as being of Arab descent, with dark hair and eyes. They are believed to be armed with handguns and knives.

The robbery took place on Friday night, November 14, in the Al Rashid suburb of Amman. The four suspects approached a group of eight university students who were walking home from a lecture. They demanded money and valuables from the students. The students fled, and the suspects fled with the loot.

Police received a tip-off about the robbery on Saturday morning. They launched a search for the suspects. They have not yet been identified.

teller and ordered the student to withdraw some money, and then returned to their apartment in Al Rashid.

Meanwhile, a 17-year-old Mahes youth who went missing for seven days returned to his family Thursday, according to officials.

Hadi Ayed left his house on the morning of Nov. 6 with JD7 in his pocket and told his family that he was going to certify his birth certificate.

An official source said the youth, who did not wish to continue his education and wanted to work against his family's will, left his home looking for a job and tried to work in Amman, Ajloun, and Irbid, but failed and decided to return to his family.

The minor's family pleaded Wednesday in one of the Arabic dailies for their son's safe return and said they had notified all police stations and hospitals.

## Amman Municipality, engineers association sign agreement on unlicensed buildings

AMMAN (Petra) — The Greater Amman Municipality and the Jordan Engineers Association (JEA) Saturday signed a memorandum of understanding for settling problems with unlicensed buildings within the Amman region.

Falah Emoush, the assistant to the Amman mayor, said the memorandum, which takes effect as of this month and ends in June 1998, allows the owners of unlicensed buildings to obtain licences in accordance with Article Seven of the 1993 Jordanian Building Code, which aims at preventing random construction of buildings and ensuring safety measures.

Mr. Emoush said the memorandum only covers

unlicensed buildings erected before April 17, 1993, and added that the municipality will stop issuing licences for structures built without JEA approval.

Designs and blueprints of any unlicensed building within the Amman area should be issued by registered engineering offices and signed by engineers of the concerned specialisations, he said.

The document explained that for unlicensed buildings to be licensed, these documents should accompany photos of the buildings in question and documents verifying their age, as well as certificates from the Jordan Electric Power Company, the Water Authority, and other necessary official departments.

## Majali briefs Cabinet on U.N.-Iraq crisis

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Council of Ministers Saturday heard briefings by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali and Foreign Minister Fayez Tarawneh on the efforts under way to end the crisis between the U.N. and Iraq and His Majesty King Hussein's role in these endeavours.

Following the regular Cabinet meeting, Minister of State for Information Affairs Samir Mutawi told reporters that the King held a meeting with U.S. President Bill Clinton and discussed the U.N.-Iraq crisis, as well as other questions of mutual interest in Jordan and the U.S.

"Jordan believes that all efforts should be made in order to prevent any escalation of the present situation," said Dr. Mutawi, adding that King Hussein also had contacts with Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz.

The prime minister and foreign minister briefed the Cabinet on these contacts and the latest developments in this crisis, he said.

"I would like to state that the media should highlight the active Jordanian role in focusing on the humanitarian dimension of this crisis," the minister said.

According to Dr. Mutawi, Deputy Prime Minister Jawad Anani, who is leading Jordan's delegation to the Middle East and North Africa Summit in Doha, outlined Jordan's goals in the coming meeting. He said Jordan will submit numerous projects to the conference and open the way for financiers and investors to take part in their implementation.

According to Dr. Mutawi, the Council of Ministers endorsed the formation of the National Committee of Jordanian Women, chaired by HRH Princess Basma.

The committee comprises the ministers of planning, justice, and social development, representatives of Parliament, the secretaries general of the ministries of labour, municipal and rural affairs and the environment, and education, and a number of women active in non-governmental organisations.

The Cabinet approved a memorandum of understanding on agricultural exchanges between Jordan and Iraq that was concluded during a visit by the minister of agriculture to Iraq last month.

The meeting approved a memorandum of understanding concluded with a number of foreign firms that have bid to extract oil from oil shale for power generation.

including Judges Ahmad Ayash and Aref Syouf, decided to contact the GSD to inquire on the subject and set Nov. 17 for this purpose.

The four men, all in their 20s, are being tried on charges of possessing illegal explosives and automatic weapons, which according to the prosecution charge sheet, were to be used in an attack against Israel during the month of Ramadan.

The four defendants, who pleaded not guilty, testified in court that they had thought about carrying out the attacks "but changed [their] minds because [they] all supported families."

## Parents testify they had no knowledge of sons' alleged arms smuggling to Israel

By Rana Hussein Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The parents of three of the eight suspects standing trial on charges of smuggling arms and weapons to Israel Saturday told the State Security Court that they had no knowledge of their sons' alleged activities.

The defence witnesses were testifying on behalf of their sons, Youssef Suleiman, 33, Ismael, 27, and Abdul Aziz, 19, who are part of ten people charged with smuggling guns, rifles, and automatic weapons. Two of the ten are being tried in absentia.

"I never heard that any of my three sons were trafficking arms to Israel. They all have their own jobs in Jordan," said Fideh Abdul Razaq, the mother of the three.

The father, Suleiman Salem, told the court that two of his three sons work as drivers while the third is a farmer.

According to the prosecution charge sheet, several members of the group managed to smuggle arms to Israel via the Dead Sea for profit. They were arrested by Jordanian authorities on April 13 of this year.

The court postponed the case to Nov. 23 to hear more witnesses.

Meanwhile, in the case of four men standing trial on charges of plotting attacks against Israel, the same court Saturday decided to postpone the case for two days to receive a response from the authorities verifying the period and place in which the four men were detained.

The court's decision followed a request Saturday by the defence attorneys that the prosecution "clarify where our clients were held from July 16, 1997, when they were arrested by the General Security Department (GSD), until they were transferred to the military prosecutor for questioning Aug. 2."

The tribunal, headed by Judge Youssef Faouri and

including Judges Ahmad Ayash and Aref Syouf, decided to contact the GSD to inquire on the subject and set Nov. 17 for this purpose.

The four men, all in their 20s, are being tried on charges of possessing illegal explosives and automatic weapons, which according to the prosecution charge sheet, were to be used in an attack against Israel during the month of Ramadan.

The four defendants, who pleaded not guilty, testified in court that they had thought about carrying out the attacks "but changed [their] minds because [they] all supported families."

## International agricultural fund offers Jordan \$4 million loan for project

AMMAN (Petra) — The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) has agreed to offer a \$4 million loan to help Jordan carry out a \$9 million project for the development of pasture lands, Minister of Agriculture Mijhem Khreisha announced Saturday.

Upon his return from the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) meeting in Rome, Mr. Khreisha said the loan will help Jordan implement the first stage of the project, which is designed to expand pasture lands, especially in the badia regions, to boost livestock production, and raise the living standards of tribes living in the semi-desert regions.

According to the minister, he met with the FAO director general, who expressed the organisation's appreciation for Jordan's support of the FAO's mission of fighting hunger and malnutrition and reducing the gap between the world's rich and poor.

Discussions with the FAO director also covered future cooperation and the execution of a number of vital projects in the agricultural sector, he said.

Topics taken up at the meeting, the minister added, included prospects for further FAO assistance in modernising a special laboratory for testing fruits and vegetables and ameliorating the losses suffered by farmers during the frost wave last spring, estimated at \$107 million.

The minister also met IFAD Director General Fawzi Sultan to discuss the progress of projects financed by the fund in Jordan, including the pasture lands project, and the development of the Yarmouk River basin, on which a feasibility study is being prepared.

Mr. Khreisha told Mr. Sultan that Jordan has realised major strides in attaining self-sufficiency in various agricultural products, with the major exceptions of cereals, fodder, and red meat.



Mijhem Khreisha living standards of tribes living in the semi-desert regions.

## University announces JD25 million tender for medical equipment

RAMTHA (Petra) — The Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST) has floated a JD25 million tender for the supply and installation of stationary equipment for the King Abdullah Ben Al Hussein Training Hospital, which will be established within the JUST campus near the northern city of Ramtha, according to JUST Vice President Anwar Bantkhi.

The university's finance department will study the bids before passing them on to the Ministry of Planning for endorsement, which is needed before contracts can be made with Arab and foreign financiers to provide funds for the project's implementation, he said.

The Ministry of Planning is expected to approach the Kuwait-based Arab Fund for Social and Economic Development, the Jeddah-based Islamic Development Bank.

Dr. Bantkhi added that the university has created a technical committee grouping representatives of the Ministry of Health and Medical Care, the University of Jordan, the Blood Bank, Yarmouk University, the Jordan University Hospital, and JUST to supervise the study of the stationary equipment bids.

The hospital is expected to be completed by the end of this year, he said.

## Malpractice suit plaintiff calls for greater attention to children's health

AMMAN (J.T.) — A man who filed a malpractice lawsuit five years ago with the Jordan Medical Association (JMA) has called on the minister of health to direct greater attention to children and said he reserves the right to sue the doctor and the hospital responsible for the medical mistakes.

In a report last week in the Arabic daily Al Arab Al Yawm, Mohammad Fahd Haroun said a mistake made by his wife's specialist at a private hospital cost the life of his child and his wife's reproductive health, as she was forced to undergo a hysterectomy.

Mr. Haroun said his wife was admitted to J.A. hospital in 1992, where she delivered a baby boy under the supervision of her doctor, identified only as F.M.

The doctor performed the hysterectomy without informing Mr. Haroun of the need for surgery, and his new-born baby, Abu Seif Haroun, was put in an incubator for several weeks without a reason being given, he said.

Two weeks later the mother and the baby were discharged and he had to pay the hospital bill of JD1,400, in addition to a JD400 doctor's fee, he continued.

"The baby's health deteriorated and I rushed him to Al Bashir Hospital, where I was told that my son was born with cerebral palsy and that my wife had undergone a hysterectomy without my knowledge. My child could not be treated here, so I took him to Egypt for medical treatment, but he died recently at the age of five," according to Mr. Haroun.

"Based on the information available to me, I lodged an official complaint in 1992 with the JMA disciplinary board. Although I attended some of the board's sessions and hearings, I was not informed of their ruling or of any decision against the doctor until June 22, 1995.

"I then received a copy of the board's ruling imposing a fine of JD150 on the doctor for her malpractice, which was to be paid to the JMA fund, and sending her a letter of reprimand," he said.

## WHAT'S GOING ON

- FIFTH JORDANIAN THEATRE FESTIVAL**
- \* Two plays entitled "The Nation's Moon" and "The Martyrs Return" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m., respectively.
- DIALOGUE**
- \* "Current Arab Affairs" by intellectual Mr. Manh Al Sulh with the participation of Mr. Taher Kan'an, Dr. Munir Hamarneh, Mr. Mu'nis Al Razzaz, and Mr. Mazen Al Saket at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, Jabal Amman at 6:00 p.m. (to be followed by open discussion with the public).
- LECTURE**
- \* Lecture by Jordanian artist Nasr Abdul Aziz on his artworks and vision of art at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh at 6:00 p.m.
- EXHIBITIONS**
- \* Exhibition of wallhangings and weavings by Bashar Kathem and others at Noor Al Hussein Foundation, off Wadi Saqra Street (Tel. 699131/2) until Dec. 4.
  - \* Paintings by Bahija Al Hakim at Hammurabi Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5536098), until Nov. 22.
  - \* "Journeys Within" by Pakistani artist Gulgee and his son, sculptor Amin Gulgee, at the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Art (Tel. 630128), until Dec. 15.
  - \* Paintings by Jordanian artist Nasr Abdul Aziz at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, until Dec. 31.
  - \* Works by Syrian artist Khaled Al Maz at Baladna Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5537598), until Nov. 22.
  - \* Bani Hamida fall exhibition "Encounter" (displaying rugs designed by Japanese textile designer Tomoko Iyoda) at Bani Hamida House, Jabal Amman, until Nov. 25 (Tel. 65869677).
  - \* Exhibition of wicker accessories from Wadi Rayan, handicrafts and gift items at the Jordan Rivers Designs showroom (Tel. 613081), until Nov. 23.
  - \* Paintings by Patrice Cadennec at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Amman, until Nov. 20.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

- Medical centre offers free treatment**
- AMMAN (Petra) — A two-week medical clinic began Saturday at Al Amal Cancer Centre on the occasion of King Hussein's birthday. Treatment and medication will be for free for all citizens.
- Vocational training course opens**
- AMMAN (Petra) — A training course was inaugurated Saturday at the Vocational Training Corporation (VTC) for Palestinian trainees. Fourteen participants from the Palestinian National Authority's Ministry of Labour are taking part in the two-week course.
- Education conference to open Monday**
- IRBID (Petra) — An educational conference will open Monday at Yarmouk University with the participation of specialists from Sudan, Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman, and Palestine, in addition to specialists from Jordanian universities. The conference, which is entitled "Educational Sciences," is being organised by the Department of Curriculum and Education at the university.
- Art exhibition opens at JUST**
- RAMTHA (Petra) — President of Jordan University of Science and Technology Sa'd Hijazi opened a comprehensive art exhibition at the campus on the occasion of King Hussein's birthday. The exhibition will last for one week.
- Commemorative stamps issued to mark King's birthday**
- AMMAN (Petra) — On the occasion of the 62nd birthday of His Majesty King Hussein, the Ministry of Telecommunication and Transport Saturday issued three commemorative categories of stamps.



# Francophone summit gets down to business

HANOI (R) — Leaders of nearly 50 nations taking part in Vietnam's Francophone summit were due to get down to business Saturday following a day of ill-concealed calls to make the grouping a hasty Anglo-Saxon domination.

With the summit's opening pomp and ceremony behind it, the closed-door gathering was due to hammer out a Francophone "Hanoi declaration" to be unveiled Sunday, and a plan of action to put that statement into effect.

Officials said the declaration would carry commitments from member states on settlement of conflicts. It would also contain five main themes including preventive diplomacy — which embraces democracy, the state of law and human rights.

The others were interna-

tional relations, economic and social development, regional economic integration and Francophone politics.

The first Francophone secretary general, who is due to be formally elected Sunday, will have the task of overseeing the plan of action.

Former U.N. chief Boutros Ghali is standing unopposed for the post. The Egyptian was championed by Paris for a second term at the United Nations, but failed to win it because of strong opposition from Washington.

The three-day summit began Friday with calls by leaders taking part to make the organisation a more effective and vibrant political force on the world stage.

"Our joint combat will allow us to avert the risk of a world where speech, thought and creativity

comes from the same mould," French President Jacques Chirac told the opening ceremony to applause. "From now on, Francophonie will have one voice and one face."

The topic was a common one mentioned by other leaders of La Francophonie, a loose association of 49 member states, Albania, Poland and Moldova.

This weekend's meeting is the first time the group has held its biennial meeting in Asia, and the first time that Communist Vietnam, not so long ago a virtual pariah state, has hosted an international summit.

Estimates of the number of people who speak French in Vietnam, a former colony, range from 70,000 to 500,000: either way it is very few for a country of 77 million peo-

ple. But Vietnam's President Tran Duc Luong, who is said to have studied French for months ahead of the meeting, reminded delegates of the importance of strengthening economic ties to battle poverty among the organisation's poorer states.

More than three-quarters of the community's members are developing nations, most of them from Central and West Africa.

La Francophonie says it has changed from being a guardian of the French language to being a defender of political, cultural and linguistic pluralism in the face of creeping globalisation.

Few say it publicly, but many see the group as a buffer against Anglo-Saxon — or even specifically American — values, thinking and economics.



French President Jacques Chirac is given a kiss by a Vietnamese school girl as he inaugurates the Trung Nhat College in Hanoi (Reuters photo)

## Rights group snipes at Chirac over Vietnam stand

HANOI (R) — A Paris-based human rights group criticised French President Jacques Chirac Saturday for urging low-key media coverage of Vietnam's human rights record.

"It has been demonstrated in many places that well-informed public opinion can make totalitarian regimes retreat on repression," Alliance Vietnam Liberte said in a statement received by Reuters. "The media have shown time and time again their effectiveness in defending human rights."

Mr. Chirac, who is in Vietnam for a state visit and to attend a summit of Francophone nations, has urged a measured stand on Vietnam's human rights record, saying rash comments will not help the situation.

"On the question of human rights, it is not in pleasing yourself with untidely and irresponsible declarations that you make progress," he told reporters earlier this week.

Mr. Chirac discreetly broached the subject of human rights in a meeting with Vietnam's president, Tran Duc Luong, Wednesday, French officials

said. Mr. Chirac has said his aim in this area was to be effective by being low-key.

Vietnam's human rights record has been thrown into the public domain in the past week, raising concern that it could mar the French president's visit and the Francophone summit.

Different organisations accuse Hanoi of increasing internal repression and seeking to stifle the media.

Human Rights Watch/Asia warned that while Hanoi was undertaking efforts to promote its open-door and reform policies it was also moving to codify the repression of civil and political rights.

Several rights groups issued statements to coincide with Mr. Chirac's visit and the seventh summit of La Francophonie in an effort to draw more public attention to the human rights problems in the Communist country.

"In Vietnam, where the local media are not much more than propaganda instruments for the regime, the fact that the international media... raise their voice over the question of human rights is very useful for the French and the whole world to be able to know at least some of

the truths of this country," Alliance Vietnam Liberte said.

"Only their silence would be irresponsible."

The organisation also lashed out at Mr. Chirac for saying that globalisation naturally leads to a certain harmonisation of conceptions about liberty.

"...Because there is no wealth without economic liberty, and when there is economic liberty there are inevitably political liberties which follow," he said Thursday.

But the Alliance Vietnam Liberte said that was not always the case.

"China changed its economy more than 20 years ago, but the regime is still totalitarian and it continues to deny its people fundamental liberties," it said.

"Must we wait 20 or 30 years more before the dictators accept they have to give a bit of freedom to their people?" it asked.

"Moreover, in Vietnam and other totalitarian regimes, the economic liberalisation doesn't benefit more than a minority of the dictators who want more in order to consolidate their power."

## Anti-immigrant campaign dominates Danish regional elections

COPENHAGEN (AFP) — A heated debate over Denmark's liberal immigration policies is dominating the campaign for next Tuesday's elections, focusing on a xenophobic right-wing faction expected to emerge from the electoral shadows.

Polls show the People's Party (PP), a two-year-old splinter faction of the extreme-right Progress Party, could win six per cent of the vote in the local and regional elections when some four million Danes and 140,000 resident foreigners go to the polls.

That gain would be largely at the expense of the ruling Social Democrats, who are being given 28 per cent in the polls, down 7.1 per cent from what they won in 1993.

Denmark's liberal grouping is holding more or less steady at 26 per cent and the conservatives have dropped slightly to 12 per cent.

The PP's sudden leap in popularity — it was non-existent in 1993 — is being credited to its leader, a driven and charismatic woman named Pia Kjaersgaard.

"She lays down the law, hangs her fist on the table and screams out loud and strong that foreigners are making people feel insecure in Denmark," said Johannes Andersen, political researcher at the University of Aalborg.

"With her aggressive style, she is allowing a certain segment of the public to vent its frustrations," he explained. "The foreigner has become the symbol of all evils, and Pia Kjaersgaard, the figurehead of a movement that demands action."

Aalborg analyst Soeren Rishøj Thomsen said the PP should emerge the big winner, relatively speaking, in Tuesday's vote, even though it is only running candidates in 142 of the country's 275 voting districts.

"The support for the extreme-right," said Finn Aaberg, Social-Democrat mayor of the Copenhagen suburb of Aalborg, "shows that citizens are furious that those elected to parliament are not taking their problems seriously."

"It does not mean that they have become racist," he said.

Mr. Aaberg said immigrants are soft targets for right-wing venom because, although they make up only 4.5 per cent of the population, they are highly visible, concentrated in a limited number of city ghettos.

"We have created, through our own passiveness, an apartheid, the Danish way, by allowing things to rot," said the mayor.

"The immigration theme has been revived in recent months by the media," said Hamid El Mousti, a

Moroccan elected to the Copenhagen City Council in 1989.

The press, he said, has been highlighting the problems of the Somali refugees who number only about 10,500 in Denmark, and violence among a small group of young Palestinians.

"It's been worrying for a public which, thanks to the country's economic wellbeing, has little else to worry about," said Mr. El Mousti.

In fact, the immigration issue has pushed more traditional local questions of taxes, retirement homes, day care centres, schools and hospitals into the background in this campaign.

Some parties, the Social Democrats for example, have attempted to side-step the increasingly sensitive immigration issue by concentrating on debates over the environment and food quality control.

"Local elections are not a barometer of the national mood, they only show a tendency," said Mr. Thomsen of Aarhus University.

"People know that local politics have nothing to do with national politics. They vote not by ideology, but by pragmatism, in order to get results in their neighbourhood, their village, their city."

Of the 18,000 candidates seeking 4,700 seats in Tuesday's elections, more than 200 are immigrants.

## Blast injures 9 as Indian president visits Kashmir

SRINAGAR, India (AFP) — Nine people were injured Saturday in a hand grenade attack in Srinagar, in the troubled state of Kashmir, where Indian President K.R. Narayanan arrived earlier in the day for a function, the police said.

Four policemen and five civilians were injured in the attack in the city's Batmaloo district, four kilometres away from a state complex where Mr. Narayanan had chaired an university function, they said.

Muslim militants threw the grenade at a police post and ran away. Five pedestrians walking past the bunker were hit by shrapnel.

The police said the attack came an hour after the president of India was escorted to a high-security hotel to attend the annual convocation of Srinagar's main university.

Mr. Narayanan is the first Indian president to visit Kashmir since 1989, when an armed Muslim separatist struggle erupted in the Himalayan territory bordering Pakistan.

Witnesses, meanwhile, said a general strike called by Muslim separatists and others to protest Mr. Narayanan's visit paralysed life in the northern Indian state Saturday.

Private vehicles stayed off roads and businesses remained closed following the shutdown, they said, adding that several students' forums also urged the new students to boycott the university convocation.

At least 20,000 people have died in Kashmir, India's only Muslim-majority state, since 1989 when the anti-Indian rebellion took hold in the valley.

India accuses Pakistan of arming and training the Muslim separatist guerrillas.

Islamabad denies the allegation but extends moral and diplomatic support to what it describes as the Kashmiris' legitimate struggle for self-rule.

## ICRC allowed to visit injured E. Timorese

JAKARTA (AFP) — The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has been allowed to visit seven people injured after soldiers fired on students in an East Timor university, an ICRC official said Saturday.

At least four people were injured and several buildings damaged by rocks and bullets after police and troops fired at students on the campus of Universitas Timor Timur in Dili Friday, residents said.

The seven injured people were admitted to a military hospital in Dili, the official said.

"The five civilians and two soldiers were visited this afternoon around noon (0400 GMT)," Henry Fournier, the head of the Indonesian ICRC delegation, told AFP.

The ICRC has already lodged an official protest after an injured man was dragged from one of their vehicles by police.

Mr. Fournier said one of the patients visited at the Wira Husada Hospital in Dili, the capital of East Timor, was the man who was dragged out of the ICRC vehicle.

The Indonesian army said Saturday it had detained eight people after Friday's clash.

East Timor military commander Col. Slamet Sidiabutar told AFP the eight were arrested Friday after they attacked three soldiers.

Mr. Fournier could not comment on the condition of the patients but added that there was no indication anyone was killed in the clash.

## Woman to appeal conviction for slapping daughter

DETROIT (R) — A woman found guilty of assault and battery for disciplining her 14-year-old daughter with a slap across the face said Friday she plans to appeal the misdemeanor conviction.

Katherine Herren, 32, told Reuters in a telephone interview that she plans to fight the conviction, handed down by a jury Thursday, because it could prevent some parents from taking proper disciplinary action.

"I just think the judicial system crossed the line. It's a horrible message to parents," Ms. Herren said.

"There's a lot of parents who are afraid to do anything now to control their kids. Kids probably think this is really cool because they can do whatever they want now," The charge is punishable by

up to 90 days in jail and a \$500 fine, but judge Brian Mackenzie said Mrs. Herren would not have to spend time in jail and could get the charges dropped if she completes a counselling and probation programme.

The case stemmed from a July 19 scuffle between Mrs. Herren and her daughter, Amber Russell, at the family's mobile home in the Western Detroit suburb of Novi, Michigan, after Amber left the house despite being told to stay in.

Amber testified that when she returned home she swore at her mother and stepfather and said she had hit her mother first, and that her mother then slapped her across the face.

## Polish paper publishes list of alleged Russian spies

WARSAW (AFP) — The Polish newspaper Zycie Saturday published a list of 23 Russians, alleging they had been spying in Poland since 1990.

Four of the Russians, identified as Alexander Babynko, Alexander Poroshin and Vladimir Siemienov, senior officials at the Russian embassy here, and Valery Shviers, consul general in the city of Poznan, continue to work in Poland as diplomats, it added.

An embassy official contacted by AFP would not comment on the report and refused to give his name.

Zycie said former Russian Ambassador Yuri Kashlev was the "heart and brains" behind the 23 Russians' activities.

Mr. Kashlev, a former KGB agent who was uncovered by the British secret service in 1971 and expelled from Britain, was Moscow's envoy to Poland between 1990 and January this year.

Citing independent informers, the newspaper said the Polish intelligence agency UOP "knew everything about the 23 agents — officers and collaborators of the Russian secret service" in 1995. At the time, the UOP suspected a total of 28 other Russian diplomats of spying on behalf of Moscow.

According to former Polish Interior Minister Andrzej Milczanowski, Russian intelligence is well established in Poland, which it considers a strategic country as it borders on NATO members Germany and Denmark across the Baltic Sea.

## Jailed Chinese dissidents to be released soon — reports

HONG KONG (AFP) — A Hong Kong newspaper said Saturday jailed Chinese dissident leaders Wei Jingsheng and Wang Dan could be released by the authorities in "a few days."

Wei Jingsheng could leave for the United States, Sunday and Wang Dan could be released on medical parole later, the Chinese-language Apple Daily said, citing sources close to Beijing Foreign Ministry officials.

There was no official confirmation of the report and members of both families contacted by AFP said they had heard no news of an imminent release.

Mr. Wei, 47, is a veteran Chinese political prisoner and has enjoyed only six months of freedom in the past 18 years. He was sentenced in December 1995 to 14 years in prison for sedition.

Considered the father of China's democracy movement, he was one of the prime movers behind the first anti-government movement in 1978-79 during Deng Xiaoping's regime known as Beijing Spring.

Mr. Wang, 27, was sentenced last year to 11 years in prison for a series of "counter-revolutionary" crimes — including attempting to overthrow the government. He had previously served a four-year jail sentence for his leading role in the 1989 Tiananmen square protests.

Since his second term of incarceration, Wang's health has deteriorated rapidly, according to his family, who say his ailments include a serious prostate condition, a possible brain tumour and a stomach disorder.

Mr. Wang's mother, Wang Lingyun, said she visited her son in prison Friday and had asked him about rumours of his imminent release.

"Wang Dan did not hear of any such order (for his release) and even the prison officials whom I spoke to said they were not given such an order," she told AFP.

"Hong Kong reporters have been calling me and I also told them that I haven't heard anything," she added. "We have petitioned the government several times and we have been refused several times. They have given us no indication of any release," she said.

Mr. Wei's younger brother Wei Xiaotao also said he had heard no news of a possible release.

"Up to this moment, we have heard nothing," he said. "Several journalists have called me and asked about this but I don't know," he added. "I don't want to guess. I just don't know," he said.

Hopes were raised that China would relax its suppression of dissidents after the U.S. ambassador to China, James Sasser, said Thursday he was optimistic Beijing would release more political prisoners in the next few weeks.

"I am not only hopeful but maybe even optimistic that we will see some releases in the next few weeks," Mr. Sasser said.

Shortly before his U.S. visit last month, President Jiang Zemin was deluged with letters from human rights activists and Chinese dissidents asking for the release of political prisoners and a reevaluation of the 1989 military crackdown on pro-democracy students in Tiananmen Square.



# Jailed Chinese dissident to be released soon

— report

HONG KONG (AP) — Hong Kong newspaper Sunday reported that a Chinese dissident leader, Wei Jingsheng, was expected to be released by the authorities soon.

Wei Jingsheng, 61, was arrested in 1989 for his role in the Tiananmen Square protests. He was sentenced to 15 years in prison.

There was no official confirmation of his release, but the report was widely expected.

Mr. Wei, a Chinese dissident, had been in prison for 15 years.

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## Sri Lanka begins inquiry into power station attack

COLOMBO (AFP) — Sri Lanka Saturday began a major inquiry into a daring bomb attack on a tightly-guarded power station in the capital, officials said.

Investigators began questioning all security personnel who were on duty at the Kelanitissa power station when seven time bombs exploded Friday morning and started a blaze, officials said.

"The attempt is to find out the reasons for this very serious breach of security," a senior police officer said, adding that security may have been laxer than normal because Friday was a Buddhist holiday.

The Defence Ministry said the bombs caused minor damage to fuel storage tanks within the 220-megawatt thermal plant but there was no disruption to electricity supplies.

The ministry said the attack was carried out by the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), which was also accused of staging a huge truck bombing here a month ago on another Buddhist holiday.

"A very small group of LTTE terrorists had fixed explosive devices designed to set off automatically," the ministry said. "Terrorists have failed in their attempt to destroy the power station."

There were no casualties. Official sources said infiltrators cut through wire fences and entered the plant through its back yard facing a waterway and several shanties. They said two of the seven bombs slightly damaged three fuel tanks but the leaks were quickly plugged.

The pre-dawn attack came despite routine overnight closures of roads around the facility and tight security within the complex. It has diesel, gas and steam generators to augment the country's hydro-electricity generation.

Investigators found at least four unexploded devices identical to the bombs that exploded, officials said. "The bag in which the charges were brought into the premises was also found," an official said.

Colombo fire chief Jayampathy Kannangara said the fire was caused by an explosive device on the side of one of the tanks but the flames were doused within 20 minutes.

Official sources said the explosives were similar to those used by the LTTE against the country's main oil storage depot here in October 1995. The depot is near the Kelanitissa power station.

The military is braced for a final offensive against the LTTE in the north of the country and defence sources said they had been expecting retaliatory attacks.

For the past six months troops have been conducting their biggest and bloodiest offensive against the LTTE in a bid to open a key land route in the north of the country.

More than 810 government soldiers have died according to official estimates while the military says it has killed more than 2,500 rebels.

There was no immediate reaction to the explosions at Kelanitissa station from the LTTE, which is fighting for independence in the island's north and east.

## Bodies of slain U.S. oilmen leave amid alert

KARACHI, Pakistan (R) — The bodies of four U.S. oilmen killed in a daylight ambush were flown home for burial Saturday amid a fresh U.S. warning on travel by Americans after a Pakistani was sentenced to death for killing two CIA agents.

The bodies were brought amid tight security to Karachi airport, each coffin decked with flowers and put on board a chartered aircraft in a brief ceremony attended by friends and colleagues from U.S. oil giant Texas Union.

"We do not understand the death of these individuals nor do we accept it," the head of Union Texas Pakistan, Arnold Hoffman said.

U.S. Consul-General Richard Douglas Archer said more Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) agents were due to arrive to help their Pakistani counterparts investigate Wednesday's attack, in which the Americans' Pakistani driver was also killed.

The ceremony was held on the eve of the arrival of U.S. secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, and 24 hours after her department issued a new warning to Americans about possible revenge attacks after the death sentence on Mir Aimal Kasi.

He was sentenced by a court in Fairfax, Virginia Friday for the 1993 killings of two Central Intelligence Agency employees outside the spy agency's headquarters in a morning rush hour traffic jam.

The U.S. embassy in Islamabad, where Ms. Albright is expected Sunday evening, also issued a warning to U.S. citizens after the sentence on Kasi and the conviction of Ramzi Yousef by a U.S. court this week for the 1993 New York World Trade Centre bomb.

"While there have been no specific threats received as a result of these two events, the U.S. embassy would still like to urge everyone to pay particular attention to the security guidance previously put out with an emphasis on maintaining a low profile," an embassy statement said.

The bodies of the Americans were taken to the airport in a large convoy of ambulances, led and tailed by several police and U.S. consulate vehicles, witnesses said.

Karachi police were put on high alert. "We will not take any chances this time. All possible precautions have been made to guard the foreign missions and companies," a police spokesman said.

No group has claimed responsibility for the clinical attack which killed the five men. Police have played down speculation linking Kasi's conviction Monday with the attack.

Government officials have labelled it a botched attempt to sabotage Ms. Albright's visit, the first by a serving U.S. secretary of state for 13 years, and plans for President Bill Clinton to arrive early in 1998.

Police reported no major breakthrough in their investigations into the first attack against foreign staff of a U.S. multinational in Pakistan's troubled port city.

"We have made a video of the place of the incident, got the sketches of the suspects, recorded the statements, recovered the car used in the attack... but I am afraid no breakthrough has been made yet," a police spokesman said.

Witnesses said police and para-military rangers were guarding foreign missions linked to the United States and other Western missions which were already under increased protection from security forces and private guards after the Wednesday killings.

Security arrangements have also been beefed up at the offices of multi-national companies and the residences of foreigners.

## Czech president warns against racism

PRAGUE (AFP) — President Vaclav Havel Saturday made an urgent appeal to Czechs to fight racism, calling it "a destructive demon whose danger is being underestimated."

Mr. Havel, who was hospitalized two weeks ago with pneumonia, and will be discharged next week, made his plea in an article published by the Prague newspaper Dnes.

Mr. Havel, 61, said he was deeply shocked by the killing last week of Sudanese student Hassan Elamin Abdelradi by a skinhead and called for a tightening of existing legislation and "fundamental policy changes in the executive."

The government "must outlaw all racist and xenophobic movements" in the Czech Republic, said the president, a former anti-Communist dissident.

Mr. Havel also called on the police "to find the force and courage to disperse all rallies... which lead to verbal and other forms of racism."

Legal authorities must rapidly prosecute and punish racist behaviour and editors of publications which spread racist and xenophobic opinions must be immediately prosecuted.

"Politicians, journalists, non-governmental organisations, teachers and all public figures must fight with much more energy against all signs of collective hate and indifference and prejudices," Mr. Havel said.

Mr. Havel had warned last month that a recent flood of Czech gypsies seeking asylum in Britain could force the European Union to bring back visa restrictions against Czech nationals.

British authorities in the port town of Dover said earlier that up to 800 Czech and Slovak gypsies had arrived in the space of a few days seeking asylum — the single biggest influx the town has seen.

Last month Mr. Havel also called on his country's government to urgently tackle the gypsy problem.

"We have to systematically and forcefully explain to our citizens the principles of human rights and human dignity. Any germ of racism or of xenophobia leads to hell, and not only for the victims," he said.

"But we also have to explain to our gypsy citizens that it's a naive illusion to think that Western democracies are going to give them asylum en masse, and that they're going to find the streets are paved with gold there."

"They're not going to find anything like that. Political asylum is very restricted and they are probably only going to find there a new round of disappointments," Mr. Havel said.

Discrimination against the 200,000 to 300,000 gypsies living in the Czech Republic has attracted the attention of international human rights organisations. One such international watchdog, the Helsinki Committee, counts the Czech gypsies among those communities treated unfairly in their home country.

Czech public opinion is often antagonistic towards the gypsy community, with many considering them to be associated with crime and unwilling to integrate into society.

## Prosecution aims to rebut Unabomber suspect's 'phobia'

SACRAMENTO, California (R) — Prosecutors Friday sought to rebut Unabomber suspect Theodore Kaczynski's alleged "phobia" of psychiatrists, saying he had sought psychiatric treatment himself at least three times.

In legal papers filed at U.S. district court in Sacramento where jury selection for the trial is now under way, the prosecution team said Mr. Kaczynski's effort to avoid undergoing psychiatric tests requested by prosecutors was a smokescreen.

"Kaczynski never mentioned his alleged phobia during the months of litigation over whether he would be required to undergo a mental examination," special attorneys Robert Cleary and Douglas Wilson wrote.

"His eleven-hour effort to use his new-found fear of psychiatrists to escape the consequences of his defiance of the court's order should therefore be rejected."

Mr. Kaczynski, 55, is accused of being the shadowy Unabomber who carried out a violent 17-year anti-technology campaign, killing three people and maiming 28 others with bombs he planted or mailed.

He is being tried in Sacramento for the bombing deaths of a local computer store owner in 1985 and timber industry lobbyist in 1995, and could face the death penalty if convicted. He has pleaded not guilty.

Mr. Kaczynski's lawyers Quin Denvir and Judy Clarke Wednesday filed papers saying the Harvard-educated former math professor was terrified of psychiatrists and therefore should not have to undergo testing by doctors selected by the prosecution.

The defence contends that Mr. Kaczynski is a paranoid schizophrenic, and wants to offer testimony by its own mental health experts to show that he was unable to form the intent to kill.

Prosecutors argue, however, that this type of testimony should be barred unless Mr. Kaczynski submits to examination by the prosecution's doctors — which he has flatly refused to do despite a court order.

"Simply stated, Kaczynski's decision to put his mental condition at issue deprives him of the right to take refuge behind his alleged phobia," the prosecution said Friday.

To bolster its claim that Mr. Kaczynski is not afraid of psychiatrists, Mr. Cleary's team presented letters Mr. Kaczynski wrote as evidence that he had sought mental help several times between 1988-1993.

While Mr. Kaczynski said he would "prefer" to undergo analysis through correspondence with a counsellor, he noted in one letter that he had seen a private therapist.

"I like her very much, but I can't ask her for any further services because I can't afford the fee," his letter said.

The prosecution's court filing stated that Mr. Kaczynski should either bow to the court and consent to be examined by its own doctors or let the matter of his mental health drop.

"Kaczynski's decision to rely on a mental defect defence is... a tacit admission that he committed two brutal murders and two other near-fatal bombings," the filing said.

"The court should apply as much coercive force as possible to seek the 'ascertainment of truth'."

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METS'97

معرض الشرق الأوسط للتكنولوجيا

١١ - ١٢ تشرين الثاني ١٩٩٧

في قاعة معرض عمان الدولي - مرج الحمام

SUNDAY

جدول ندوات المعرض ١١ / ١٦ / ١٩٩٧

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3:30-4:30	دوراد أبو جضم شركة هاني MIS Managers Successful Traits
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يفتح المعرض يومياً من الساعة ١١ صباحاً وحتى الساعة ٩ مساءً

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## Arab initiative on Iraq crisis

PRESIDENT BILL Clinton on Friday shed more light on his ultimate objective in Iraq when he linked the ending of the crippling sanctions against that Arab state to the end of President Saddam Hussein's regime. Even though the White House later tried to downplay President Clinton's words, his remarks could still explain why the inspection of Iraqi military installations appears to be an open-ended exercise. The Iraqi leader must have sensed and concluded that the U.S. agenda for the U.N. inspection units went well beyond the elimination of Iraq's mass-destruction weapons, which in turn might explain the recent decisions he has made ending a couple of days ago with the expulsion of American members of the U.N. team.

On this basis the permanent members of the Security Council appear to be deeply divided as neither Russia nor France, nor China for that matter, have a goal similar to that of the Americans.

But while most people strongly believe, and rightly so, that the solution to Iraq's woes lies in adopting democracy and political pluralism as a new way of life, those same people agree that political change must come from within Iraq. The international community can and should lend support to bringing about that change. The question that needs to be asked, however, is how this can be done. A process of elimination of unworkable solutions is in order here. For example, putting more pressure, inflicting more suffering, on the Iraqi people will not hurt the regime. It may strengthen it. Likewise military attacks against Iraqi targets will not help the cause. Subsequently such actions should be excluded from the U.S. and its allies' books.

At the same time it may be sad to note that democracy in Iraq or the well-being of peoples of this region are the real goals of American policies in the Gulf and the Middle East. And if they are, they are difficult to detect in the maze of "dual containment" policies mixed with narrow self-interests and applying double standards in dealing with different countries in this part of the world.

Through all of this, and especially at this critical time, a way has to be found not just to defuse the crisis but also to end the misery of the Iraqi people and Iraq as a country. It is time that the world powers including the U.S., sought to solve the immediate problems through political means and begun the uneasy but necessary journey to rehabilitate Iraq into the international community.

It can be done, not according to President Saddam's whims and wishes — and not by pushing him to the brink either.

There is a middle way that can be found. Maybe the Arab World, if given the chance this time, is able to find it.

The political landscape is today much different from what it was when during the Gulf crisis and war. What did not work in 1990 and 1991 might well be the solution.

## ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AI Ra'i's Fahed Fanek Saturday said Egypt absented itself from the Middle East and North Africa economic summit in Doha because Washington had declared that Cairo will attend the conference before sounding out the Egyptian government's views in this concern. That is the real reason for Cairo's boycotting the Doha meeting and not because Egypt wants to show its dissatisfaction with Israel's failure to meet the requirements of the peace process as it had been claiming, said Dr. Fanek. If Egypt wants to show its intention of boycotting Israel for its policies, he said, it could sever its relations with the Jewish state and stop supplying Israel with natural gas that feeds its major projects. Of course the U.S. is disappointed with Egypt's behaviour because it was Washington that has been encouraging the Arabs to attend the conference and is sponsoring it in practice, he added. But he said by boycotting the meeting in Doha, Egypt has left the arena for Israel to achieve its objectives.

AI Arab Al Yawm's Mubammad Kawash charged that the U.S. is trying to find any pretext to justify its attack on Iraq not only to please the Zionist-influenced Congress but rather to strengthen Israel's domination of the Arab World. The U.S. Congress is ready to give President Bill Clinton the go-ahead to strike at Iraq's military and economic installations and is willing to back the president to perpetuate the sanctions on Iraq so that it will remain weak and unable to threaten the Jewish state, said the writer. The military preparations and massing of warships and war planes in the Gulf is designed not to protect Kuwait or force Iraq to respect U.N. resolutions, he said, but rather to intimidate the Arabs and deal another devastating blow to Iraq's power. The U.S. is now launching an aggression on Iraq aimed at changing its regime, and this is a very dangerous precedent because Washington could any time later demand the change of the regimes in Sudan and Libya as a condition for lifting the sanctions on these countries. This means, he said, that the U.S. will use its military power from now on to impose on the Arabs the kind of regime that suits its taste.

## Sunday's Economic Pulse

By Dr. Fahed Fanek

# Jordan deserves more American aid

AT LONG last, and after extended hesitation, the American administration was able to manage \$100 million to assist Jordan for the fiscal year ending October 31, 1997. For some unknown reason, a Peace Fund was established in Washington D.C. to hold the money for several weeks before it is turned over to the Jordanian treasury. Half the amount is free of obligations, and the other half must be allocated to certain social and economic projects. This arrangement is supposed to go on for five years, with one difference Jordan does not care about — the funds will not be deducted in the future from the Egyptian and Israeli shares of U.S. aid. Instead, they will be formally allocated to Jordan in the official foreign aid budget. This may mean that the financial aid will be more secure and will not require the consent of a third party, even though the parties concerned have no alternative but to consent.

There is a general consensus among official U.S. circles that Jordan, which suffers a 27 per cent unemployment rate, and where 25 per cent of families live below the line of poverty, urgently needs and deserves more financial aid. No observer can help wondering why Jordan is given so little in comparison with the huge amounts of American economic and military aid paid regularly to both Egypt and Israel since signing the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty

18 years ago, considering that Jordan is much closer to the kind of peace the U.S. wants in the Middle East, and that Jordan has actually taken the highest peace risk.

An annual figure of \$250 million a year as a suitable amount was said to be circulating. As a matter of fact Jordanian public opinion was already informed that future American aid would be raised to \$250 million a year as of the coming fiscal year. At the time this was not true. There was no binding decision in this respect. It was a matter of wishful thinking until two congressional committees agreed to allocate \$225 million to Jordan even though the Congress was not asked by the administration to do so. The decision is now awaiting the approval of the president. Allocating funds is of course the prerogative of the U.S. Congress. In the Congress, where Jordan has many friends and no enemies, there are no objections to extending aid to the Kingdom. The question is why then the idea of raising financial aid to Jordan to \$250 million was not made a resolution and actual allocation much earlier.

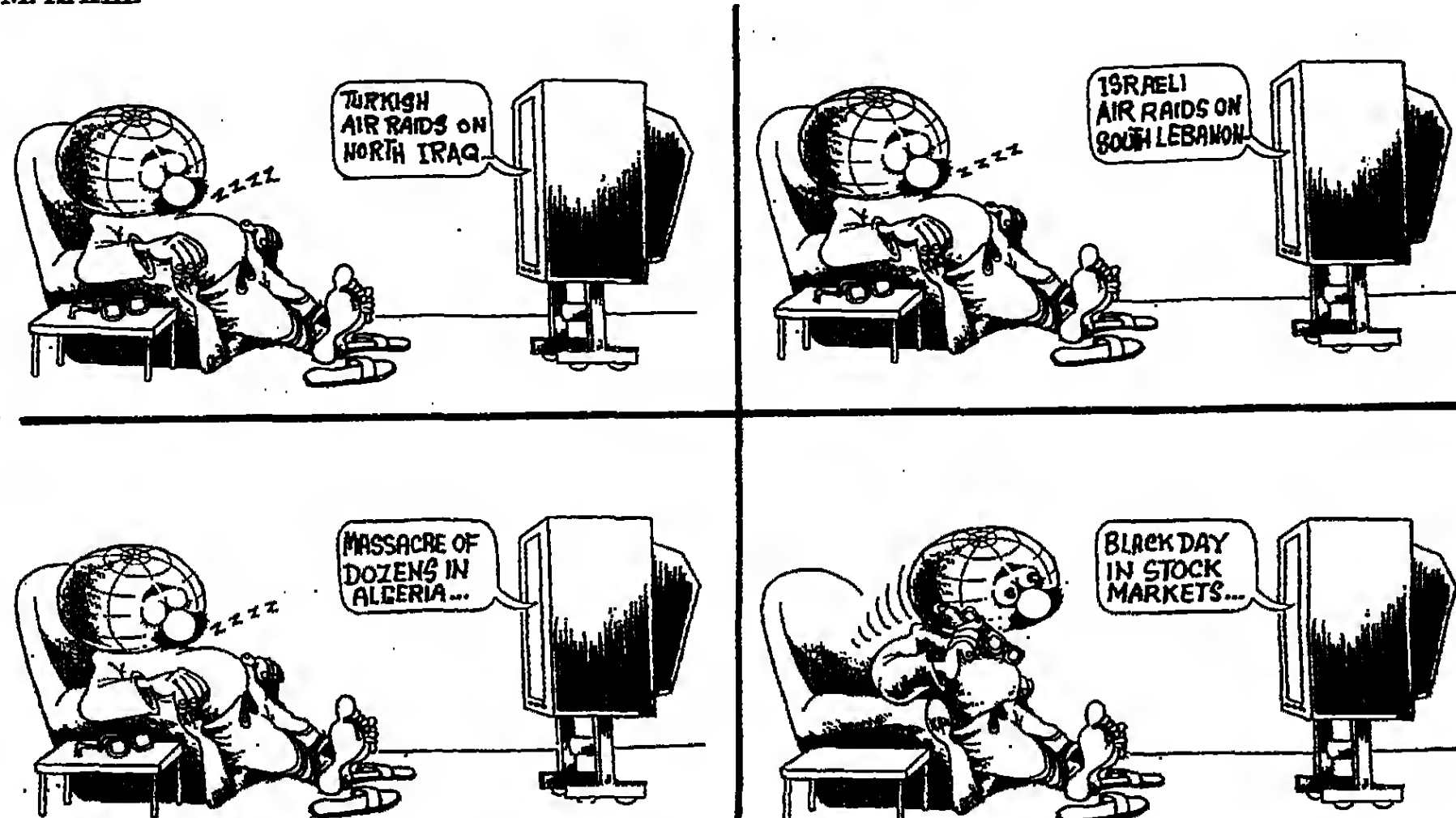
The answer is that in order for the Congress to take the decision, the White House must exert some effort to make the recommendation and provide justifications for such a move. So far the president, who made the solemn commitment in the Jordanian Parliament in October 1994 not to let us down, did not exert that effort. Perhaps this vital sub-

ject was part of the contents of His Majesty King Hussein's message to President Clinton delivered recently by HRH Crown Prince Hassan.

When Secretary of State Madeleine Albright was in the region in September, she met with officials of Israel, Palestine, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Lebanon. She must have noticed the difference. She was supposed to have been convinced of the importance of being more generous with Jordan when it comes to financial aid. Unfortunately, when Ms. Albright was questioned on the subject in a joint press conference in Amman, she mentioned only the \$100 million for five years and complained about the tight budget and the need to reduce the U.S. deficit. Such a position caused disappointment among Jordanians who it seems are expected to give more for less. They are supported to embrace peace with Israel and accept risks even though no material benefits are accruing to their country or reflected in their daily lives.

While we hoped at one time that President Clinton would go out of his way to support Jordan financially, we now hope that he will not delay the allocation made by the Congress. A tough Congress was always used as an excuse for not giving more. The Congress proved to be more appreciative to Jordan's role than the administration.

M. KAHIL



## Sierra Leone

# A country grown tired of coups

A combination of domestic resistance and foreign intervention has forced the military junta in Sierra Leone to promise to step down. Gemini News Service's correspondent in Freetown looks at the events leading up to the accord to restore democracy.

By Rod Mac-Johnson

FREETOWN — If the Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC) gives up power in Sierra Leone next April as promised, it will have stayed in office for only a quarter of the time it originally set its sights on.

In a July "mission statement" broadcast on radio and television, junta leader Major Johnny Paul Koroma told startled Sierra Leoneans that he would rule until 2001.

He faced an uphill struggle, however, because four previous coups have left a sour taste in the mouths of many people here and no one was inclined to give the military the benefit of the doubt.

The first takeover, in 1967, which toppled the civilian government led by Siaka Stevens, ended when it in turn was overthrown by non-commissioned officers, and the government was handed back to civilians.

In 1992, a second coup brought in Captain Valentine Strasser, who stressed his commitment to ending the rebel war, but instead accelerated it.

Next was a "palace coup" which ousted Strasser and brought in Brigadier-General Maada Bio. He was ousted out of office by civilians demanding "elections before peace."

The holding of elections — amid political uncertainty, the opposition

sections of the military, continuing rebel atrocities and the existence of tens of thousands of displaced people — was a remarkable achievement. So Koroma's coup was particularly galling.

The dust had barely settled when the chamber of commerce began a civil-disobedience campaign. It was supported by many students and by teachers who launched stay-at-home protests. Some civil servants refused to turn up for work and banking services were curtailed, although that was partly from fears for staff safety from undisciplined soldiers.

As the crisis continued, a number of people who were asked to join the government went underground or fled the country.

**The lesson to be drawn here is that military rule is no longer fashionable, with people well aware of growing democratisation all over the world.**

In July, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) announced sanctions and a trade embargo against Sierra Leone. The military junta dismissed the threat, which it said it could easily override.

But essential consumer goods began to dwindle. Prices escalated. Petroleum was reduced to a trickle. Neighbouring Guinea stopped goods crossing its border. Public anger was exacerbated by a series of armed robberies by men in mili-

tary uniforms, sometimes involving the killing of civilians.

The government found itself unable to shake off the heavily armed Nigerian troops in ECOWAS, the military wing of ECOWAS. They were based at the country's sole international airport at Lungi, from where they sporadically lobbed shells and tightened the air and sea blockade.

Then came the events that finally forced the junta to think again. Nigerian air force jets bombed targets in Freetown, including the military headquarters, the communications department's earth station and the radio and TV transmitters.

The Nigerians closed the main highway at Jui, a strategic point 13 miles east of Freetown, almost bringing economic life in the capital to a halt. The road had provided easy access to the city from the interior for traders bringing in vegetables from the north, rice from the south and palm oil from the east.

Now traders were forced to use the gruelling 42-mile peninsular road, which takes six hours to the capital instead of 30 minutes through Jui.

Under severe pressure, the junta's stubbornness waned, and talks were opened in Conakry, with Guinea providing a face-saving device to facilitate agreement. The AFRC agreed to step down on April 22, 1998.

Sierra Leoneans have twice proved their commitment to ending rule by soldiers. The lesson to be drawn here is that military rule is no longer fashionable, with people well aware of growing democratisation all over the world.

Gemini News

The writer is a freelance Sierra Leone journalist

## LETTERS

### A dream come true

To the Editor:

MY WIFE and I have just spent a week in Jordan as guests of His Majesty King Hussein. This was because, as an ex-Royal Engineer who had served in Jordan in 1958 with the British Army, I had wanted to get recognition for all those who had served in the Hashemite Kingdom between 1948 and 1958. King Hussein was the one person who helped this dream come true. We now have a Jordan Service Commemorative Medal which carries the imprint of the head of the King.

Of all the many things that occurred during our week, I think that the trip to the Army Museum, for me, took first place. It is a magnificent building, and when we set eyes on the Memorial to the Martyrs, we were all but speechless. It is, without doubt, wonderful and achieves its desired aim of honouring the martyrs of the Jordanian Forces.

I must admit to not being prepared when I received the great honour of being asked to water the Tree of Life. I did my best and hopefully pulled off the task correctly and with great dignity, because that is what I was feeling at the time.

Mr G. E. Harris  
124 Haven Park Crescent  
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Wales

### For the sake of the children

To the Editor:

TO UNDERSTAND what is really happening in Iraq, you only have to visit one of its children's hospitals. What you will see is the agony of sick children, serving the sentence of slow death meted out by the 180 countries of the United Nations. If the civilised world does not soon wake up, the blood of these innocent victims will soon be on its hands, and history will never forgive us. Meanwhile these suffering children hold on, and some, perhaps, will survive these atrocities.

Sumaya E. Shaker  
Amman



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## Jordanian exports to S. Arabia, Libya record high growth

By Suha Ma'ayeh  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Although total exports during the first nine months of this year declined by 6.8 per cent compared to the same period in 1996, exports to Arab countries registered a slight one per cent rise, a report issued by the Chamber of Commerce has showed.

The report, which was made available to the Jordan Times, indicated that industrial exports to Iraq shrank by 4.1 per cent compared to the same period in 1996.

Noting that exports to Iraq stood at JD99 million during the January-September period, the share of that country to the total Jordanian exports edged up from 28.4 per cent to 29.2 per cent. When measured to the total exports to Arab states, exports to Iraq were down from 45.3 per cent to 43 per cent.

The Kingdom's total exports to its eastern

neighbour in 1996 amounted to JD144.3 million.

Jordan's exports to Saudi Arabia grew by 37 per cent in the first nine months compared with the same period in 1996. The report said that the total exports to Saudi Arabia amounted to JD51 million compared with JD37 million.

The three-page report showed that exports to Syria between January and September of this year fell by a dramatic 41 per cent.

As such, the Syrian share of the total exports to Arab states dropped from 10.6 per cent to 6.2 per cent.

According to the report, exports to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), declined by 11.2 per cent and its share of the total fell from 9.4 per cent to 8.3 per cent.

The figures showed that exports to Libya posted a 20 per cent growth during the first nine months of this year compared with last year's figures.

## OPEC likely to raise output — experts

ABU DHABI (AFP) — OPEC will likely bow to pressure from Gulf oil heavyweights to raise its production ceiling for the first time in more than three years when it meets this month, oil analysts have said.

Saudi Arabia, which controls nearly a third of the output ceiling of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), has already sent a clear signal to the 11-nation group that it is time for a change.

His call last week for a higher ceiling was approved by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and will likely get the consent of Kuwait.

"Some OPEC members are opposed to an increase in the ceiling but they can not ignore demands by Gulf producers," an Abu Dhabi-based oil analyst said.

"You can say any increase in the ceiling has become a likelihood and naturally Gulf producers will be the main beneficiaries," he added.

OPEC oil ministers are due to meet in Jakarta on Nov. 26 to set a production ceiling for the first half of 1998.

The meeting comes amidst forecasts that global consumption for oil will grow by nearly two million barrels per day (bpd) to 75 million bpd in 1998.

Demand for OPEC's oil is projected to reach 27 million bpd but it is already pumping nearly one million bpd above that level.

This means any push by Saudi Arabia and its Arab Gulf allies for a rise in the ceiling should take into account quota violations by some members.

"Without a solution to the quota violations, prices could plunge if OPEC boosted the ceiling by a high percentage," an oil executive said.

Saudi Oil Minister Ali Al Nuaimi, calling the present ceiling unrealistic, said it should be raised by one million to two million bpd. He said strong demand next year warranted such an increase.

"The UAE will support an increase in the ceiling at OPEC's next meeting," UAE Oil Minister Obaid Ibn Saif Al Nasiri said.

"There is a strong possibility that the ceiling will be increased at the Jakarta conference," he told the official news agency WAM.

He said a new ceiling would give members higher quotas and "compensate" producers which have been hurt by quota violations by some members.

He did not name quota-busters but Venezuela, Nigeria and Qatar have been blamed for most of the excess supplies within the group.

"The increase could affect prices but the market will overcome this issue and prices will improve... The market appears to be ready for such an increase as the ceiling has remained unchanged for years," Mr. Nasiri said.

Excluding sanctions-hit Iraq, OPEC has not changed its members' quotas since September 1993 in a bid to avert a collapse in oil prices due to output increases by outsiders and the emergence of new producers.

Despite overproduction in the group, which controls nearly two thirds of the world's oil, crude prices have remained firm over the past two years because of strong demand and the absence of Iraq for most of 1996.

Gulf producers believe prices could improve further if quota violators

respected their shares under a new production system.

"OPEC could decide on an increase in return for a strong commitment by over-producing members to respect their quotas," an oil expert said.

"The increase could also be for the first half, when demand is high. It could be revised in the third quarter if the need arises," he added.

Apparently setting the ground for higher production, Saudi Arabia asked its main oil client Japan last week to lift its crude imports from the kingdom.

An increase of two million bpd above OPEC's ceiling of 25.033 million bpd would give Saudi Arabia an additional 600,000 bpd over its present quota of eight million bpd. Kuwait and the UAE will get nearly 200,000 bpd each while Iran will be allocated around 300,000 bpd.

"Iran might express reservations on an increase in the ceiling," an oil analyst said. "I think it is still adopting a policy of higher prices at the expense of production given its urgent need for cash."

## Japan admits economic slowdown

TOKYO (AFP) — The Japanese government has admitted the economy was at a "standstill" amid a slump in financial markets, reversing its optimistic view of the nation's business conditions.

The economic slowdown together with the swelling trade surplus was expected to renew U.S. concerns about Japan's inability to achieve domestic demand-led recovery ahead of an Asia-Pacific summit in Vancouver in late November, analysts said.

"The economy has been in a state of standstill," the Economic Planning Agency (EPA) said in its November report, which is taken as the official government verdict on the nation's economy.

It was the first time the agency gave such a negative assessment for the state of the economy since December 1995, when the yen's sharp appreciation hit manufacturers and exporters.

"The assessment was based on the fact that weak signs are seen in capital investment and

industrial output, which had sustained the bottom of the economy," an agency official said.

The report came after Japan suffered a double blow of falling stock prices and a weakening yen as funds fled the country due to growing concerns about the economy and financial system.

The key Nikkei stock average index has lost more than seven per cent since early November and the value of yen against the dollar has been slashed by five per cent.

Despite the broad-based downgrade of the assessment, Finance Minister Hiroshi Mitsuoka ruled out the view that the economy may slip into real recession.

"Although the economy is at standstill, it has not lost a recovery trend in general," Mr. Mitsuoka told a news conference.

"We want to support this trend by introducing economic measures," he said.

EPA Director-General Koji Omi said the government would unveil a package of pump-priming measures next Tuesday featuring additional

deregulatory steps and new measures to stimulate the moribund land market.

Analysts, however, said Japan would be pressed hard to take more effective measures to rehabilitate the ailing economy during the Nov. 25 summit of the 18 member Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum.

Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto and U.S. President Bill Clinton are scheduled to meet on the sidelines of the annual summit.

"Mr. Hashimoto would face a hard time in Vancouver as the U.S. president may seriously demand Japan take action to improve the current situation — the troubled economy and the growing surplus," said Hiroshi Morikawa of SRIC Corp., a research institute affiliated with Sanwa Bank Ltd.

The finance ministry said Thursday that Japan's current account surplus for the six months to September jumped 75.7 per cent from a year earlier to 5,806.0 billion yen (\$46 billion), the first year-on-

year rise in four years in the September half.

Playing down worries over the surplus, vice Finance Minister Eisuke Sakakubara, dubbed "Mr. Yen" for his influence on financial markets, forecast Japan's surplus would be slowing next year.

"We do not expect the surplus to continue growing in 1998," Mr. Sakakubara told a symposium in the western city of Kyoto.

The remark came hours after U.S. Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin said Japan must still take steps to boost domestic demand-led growth while minimising its trade surplus.

"We have said for a long time that we agree with Prime Minister Hashimoto to that the challenge Japan faces is to have domestic demand-led growth, and avoid significant and sustained external surpluses," Mr. Rubin told reporters after a speech in Washington.

US concerns about Japan's economy "are still extant," Mr. Rubin said.

## Iran partially liberalises foreign exchange market

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran's central bank has partially liberalised the foreign exchange market, allowing individuals living abroad to transfer funds at the free market rate, newspapers have said.

In a directive published in newspapers, the bank said exporters could also exchange part of their foreign earnings at the unofficial rate.

The government closed the currency market and imposed tough exchange regulations in May 1995 in a bid to prevent the collapse of the national currency, the rial.

The official export rate for the dollar is frozen at 3,000 rials, while the black market rate is around 4,600 rials.

In an effort to prevent the flight of hard currency, the bank also obliged exporters to repatriate foreign earnings.

But while the government managed to stabilise the rial against major currencies, the regulations led to a crisis in the exports business and sharply damaged the industrial sector.

Meanwhile, Iran's Commerce Minister Mohammad Shariatmadari has said his country's banking system needed reforms in order to support a drive to boost non-oil exports.

"The banking system is in need of reforms. The policy of the expansion of non-oil exports will not bear fruit so long as the current monetary practices are in effect," Mr. Shariatmadari said in comments carried by the Persian-language Iran newspaper. He did not elaborate on the needed reforms.

He put non-oil exports in the first three years of the current five-year development plan at \$10 billion, but said this was "a worrying trend" considering the plan had envisaged \$27 billion for the five years.

Currently non-oil products account for only about 15 per cent of total exports in the world's third biggest oil exporting nation after Saudi Arabia and Norway.

Mr. Shariatmadari has said ever-changing regulations governing exports were one of the main difficulties facing Iran's export industries.

## HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 1997

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

### ARIES

(March 21 to April 19) Rumours are flying, some true, but most not. The truth is being revealed, but it may be difficult to tell fact from fiction. The more unreasonable it sounds, the more likely it is to be true. Better keep your own outrageous thoughts to yourself.

### Taurus

(April 20 to May 20) You could have money coming in, possibly from something you sell. If you want to lose some things, put price tags on them first. It's also a good afternoon for romance. You two need to spend more time playing together. Go out for a drive and a movie.

### GEMINI

(May 21 to June 21) You need to be careful about what you say. Of course, you are only interested in telling the truth. But you may not know what that is yet. Don't talk about something that hasn't been decided. You could tip the game in the other person's favour.

### MOON CHILDREN

(June 22 to July 21) Things that are very difficult now will be easy tomorrow. Return phone calls, gather information, make lists and plans. But don't worry. You'll be more successful tomorrow, especially launching a new endeavour. Do your preparations now and let it go at that.

### LEO

(July 22 to August 21) Let the celebration continue. You're in a good mood, even though some of your intentions have been thwarted. Many people simply refuse to go along with anything you suggest. You'll do better with your enthusiastic, vivacious Gemini friends. Gather up a bunch of them and play.

### VIRGO

(August 22 to September 21) You want to accomplish something that's slightly out of reach. It means you have to take a leap of faith. This isn't going to be all that dangerous. You're pretty sure you can make it. You're just not sure how. Actually, you've already learned everything you need. Go for it!

### LIBRA

(September 22 to October 21) What you need is the right intellectual stimulation. You may find it with someone who doesn't have the usual characteristics you find appealing — someone too young or too old, for instance, or with a different background. Abandon your stereotypes and you'll have a lot more fun.

### SCORPIO

(October 22 to November 21) Some people talk just to hear their brains rattle. You don't have patience with that. You just want to do what works. Don't be distracted by mindless babble. If you can put money into savings, so much the better. Guard against the temptation to spend frivolously.

### SAGITTARIUS

(November 22 to December 21) Be lazy. Hang out with a friend and swap stories. Think about ways to advance your career, but don't put them into effect yet. Write letters to your sweetheart or faraway loved ones, but don't make major commitments. Share ideas. No telling what you'll come up with.

### CAPRICORN

(December 22 to January 20) There's plenty of work, but you'd rather be doing something else. Have you and your sweetheart had a honeymoon lately? You may not be able to go this weekend, but you can certainly start saving towards it. That will make whatever you're going a lot more fun.

### AQUARIUS

(January 21 to February 19) Yesterday's interesting conversations lead to deeper understanding, which could make highly improbable goals suddenly seem possible. Follow through and discover more than you ever dreamed. Don't take it too seriously, however. Avoid forever decisions. Simply play.

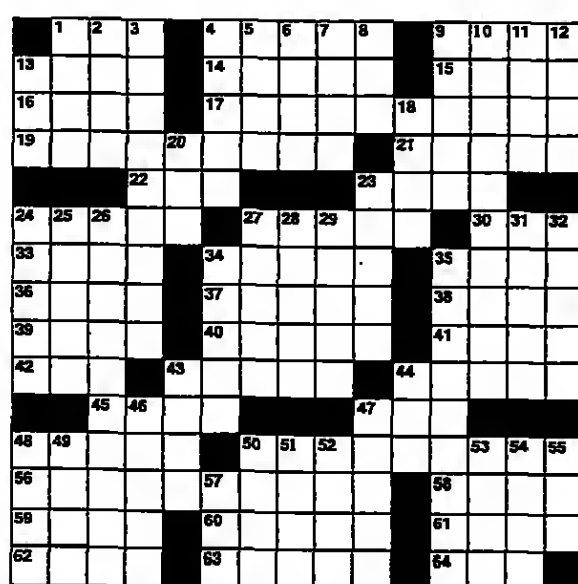
### PISCES

(February 20 to March 20) Relax, rest and do frivolous things. Don't try and make a fancy presentation. It wouldn't turn out right anyway. You'll have people drop in unexpectedly even as the folks you were expecting stand you up. It's just that kind of day, so why worry about it?

Birthstone of November: Topaz — Tiger's Eye

## THE Daily Crossword

ACROSS  
1 The sun  
4 Feminine title  
9 Eras  
13 Water flower  
14 Redolence  
15 Spinner or spoon  
16 Anatomical canal  
17 Jack-of-all-trades  
19 Boxers  
21 Spouses  
22 Army VIP  
23 Bean sauce  
24 Lawful  
27 Barges  
30 South Korean soldier  
33 Ages  
34 Oven  
35 Callas or Sutherland  
36 Trading center  
37 Nomadic shelter  
38 Army backup: abbr.



by Roger Jurgovan

Puzzle solved:



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DOWN  
1 In —  
2 Cassini of fashion  
3 Garshwin and Hammerstein  
4 Johnson  
5 God of war

6 Admonitory word  
7 Musical brothers  
8 Damage  
9 Calm  
10 Segovia and Byrd  
11 Gaelic  
12 Kites  
13 Sassa  
14 Biblical prophet  
15 Ignited  
16 "How — it is!"  
17 Dud  
18 Hot under the collar  
19 Jim Davis, e.g.  
20 Garvey  
21 Deals (with)  
22 Kites  
23 Elliptical  
24 Carpenter  
25 Cubic meter  
26 Burr and Hamilton  
27 Rant  
28 Paddle

46 Root vegetables  
47 Sheriff's group  
48 Lost  
49 Damage  
50 Pelt  
51 Employer  
52 Rockies: abbr.  
53 London district  
54 Catch  
55 Japanese money  
57 Asian holiday

## Peanuts



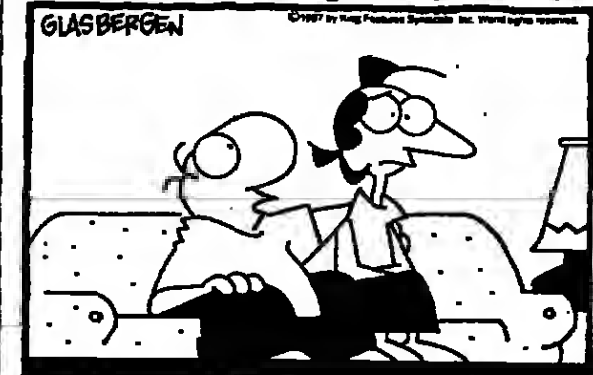
## Andy Capp



## Mutt'n'Jeff



## THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



"I had my mid-life crisis when I was 15. I figured I'd be too tired at 40."

## JUMBLE.

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

OGGRE

LULET

OTTYNK

FADGYL

Print answer here: \_\_\_\_\_

Yesterday's Jumbles: MUSIC CHICK TALKER INVEST

Answer: What the drummer was famous for — HIS STICK SHIT

## THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

by Hazel Arnold and Mike Argillett



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers tomorrow)

Business Jordan

Real Estate

810505-810506

810520

079/30007



## Jordan industrial park showcase of Mideast peace

By Suleiman Al Khalidi  
Reuters

**IRBID** — Plants making everything from textiles to electronics components are sprouting in an industrial zone on the outskirts of this major northern city just a short drive from the main trade crossing with Israel.

Al Hassan Industrial Park, located on rich arable red soil of Houran plains stretching all the way to Damascus, is only a 40-minute drive to Israel's industrial heartland.

The serene surroundings of the industrial park are an unlikely spot for a showcase project due to take centre stage this week at the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economic conference in Qatar.

Designating Irbid as a qualifying industrial zone (QIZ), by which goods produced there are given free trade status on the U.S. market, is at the heart of U.S.-Israeli-Jordanian efforts to deliver an elusive "peace dividend" to disenfranchised Jordanians.

Accelerated steps by Israeli-based global multinationals to shift capital, investment, production lines and plants to Irbid is so far — three years after the 1994 peace treaty — the most tangible by-product of a peace dividend that otherwise failed to match the hopes of its proponents.

Behind this is a sole co-gglomerate, Century Investment Group. A Jordanian public

shareholding company estimated to have a total equity value of more than \$100 million, it has defied the soured political climate hampering Arab-Israeli business ties — and the MENA conference itself.

"I look at Israel as a tool to jump start Jordan's economy and regardless of the political situation I am looking out for Jordan's future," said Omar Salah, chairman of Century.

Century has already realised some of that potential, and a breathtaking pace of expansion has created hundreds of jobs in a country with mounting unemployment and poverty.

Joint-venture deals with Israeli-based Western multinationals have in just over a year and a half resulted in the manufacture of wide range of brand name goods, mainly presold to U.S. markets.

Century's processed goods head to Israel across the Sheikh Hussein border crossing and from there to United States and European markets, tapping free-trade access that Israeli enjoys there. Even non-Israeli-related multinationals, which face higher production costs and diminishing profits in a competitive global environment, are contemplating shifting some offshore manufacturing to Jordan.

Jordan in return sees the benefits from its goods having access to sophisticated markets via Israel, while it offers production costs 40 to 60 per cent

lower than in Israel.

U.S. to designate Irbid as qualifying zone

Heartened by Century's growth, the United States has put its full weight behind an accord to transform Irbid zone into a QIZ.

For America, it is a showcase of the dynamics of regional cooperation in the face of darkening clouds as the Middle East peace process stumbles.

Lack of progress on the peace front has prompted Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Morocco, among others, to stay away from the MENA conference. Jordan is sending a high-level delegation to the meeting.

"Century Investment is seen as the role model for the future of the Middle East," U.S. Undersecretary of State Stuart Eizenstat told Jordanian businessmen recently.

He will be chairing a panel with Mr. Salah in the Doha summit titled: "Taking Risks for Peace."

The United States says the landmark move, which can be expanded to other areas in Jordan, is by far the most concrete step it has taken to promote joint ventures that involve substantial economic cooperation between Israel and Jordan.

With U.S. blessing, Jordan and Israel have already drafted an agreement on the industrial zone that grants special free trade status to these business-

es. The QIZ not only offers Israeli-based multinationals along with fully-owned Israeli plants the rationale to shift to Jordan but is a magnet for global multinationals seeking to shift some Asian operations closer to Europe.

Firms in Israel deals work in difficult climate

In less than 18 months, Century's plants have made the firm the largest single private employer in northern Jordan, and the queue of university graduates applying for jobs grows by the day.

Now 55 buses leave every morning to villages like Beit Jaffa and Husn refugee camps around Irbid to pick up more than 800 employees who work in four textile firms as well as jewellery, electronics, canning, plastics and dairy desert plants.

Century faces an uphill task to change some Jordanians' perceptions that the projects at Irbid are Israeli, a sensitive issue of Jordanians still wary of their 1994 peace treaty with Israel.

"The only threat in the beginning of the growth of Century was the fact we would be labelled as doing business with Israel," Mr. Salah said.

"In fact, we were taking away multinational investment that was in Israel and bringing it into Jordan," Mr. Salah said, adding that Israeli unions had complained to Jordan of loss of

jobs.

Most still resist any link with Israel

Century is a lone flower blossoming in an inhospitable climate. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's policies are fuelling a groundswell of hostility by most of Jordan's business elite towards any dealing with Israel, even at the price of prosperity.

Many Western-educated business figures are unwilling to attend the Doha summit, adamantly saying they would have nothing to do with a parley that has Israeli businessmen sitting next to them. They see this as legitimising Israeli acts of aggression towards fellow Palestinians.

Others harbour fear of Jordan being swallowed up by the sheer economic might of the regional powerhouse close to them.

But Century's employees, including the many women from conservative rural areas where Islamic values prevail, are countering the image and serving as the firm's best lobbyists.

"I have achieved self-satisfaction and have found my worth and it's a wonderful feeling that I am bringing (in) income. I did not have any purpose before," said Khaloud Mahasneh, 24, from Beit Jaffa, a village on the outskirts of Irbid.

## Second group of returnees to collect compensation Monday

**AMMAN (Petra)** — The higher committee in charge of delivering compensation to returnees from Kuwait and Iraq Saturday invited the second batch of category A beneficiaries to come forward as of Monday Nov. 17 to receive the compensation in accordance with a set timetable.

Labour Minister and Chairman of the Higher Committee, Saleh Khasawneh said the beneficiaries who hold the "yellow notification card" should call at the committee's office and adhere to the following instruction.

1. Beneficiaries should call at the committee's Amman office at the Hushemite Charity Organisation, Mahatta road.

2. Beneficiaries should bring along with them the family registration book and passports as well as documents proving that they were residing in Iraq or Kuwait. A power of attorney should be submitted if beneficiaries are authorising someone else to receive the compensation for them.

In case the beneficiaries are dead, a death certificate should be provided and an authorisation to collect the compensation for the heirs.

3. Beneficiaries are required to fill a special form and submit a photograph.

4. Beneficiaries should call at the committee's offices at the fixed dates as published by the committee. Should they fail to show up, they can arrange for another date.

Dr. Khasawneh said the committee had already given the first batch of category A their compensation last Wednesday noting that altogether a total of \$49 million will be given to category A beneficiaries.

The minister said that category C beneficiaries will be requested to come forward to collect their compensation at a date to be announced later noting that a total of \$10 million will be given to the category C beneficiaries.

## Cement company betters profit

**AMMAN (Petra)** — The Jordan Cement Factories Company (JCFC) has realised a noticeable improvement in its gross and net profits in the past 10 months of this year, according to company sources.

They said the improvements were made despite a retreat in the volume of local sales by 12.9 per cent compared to last year's level, according to these sources.

The company's balance sheet until Oct. 30 showed that the gross profit during these 10 months reached JD19.65 million and the net profit was JD9.35 million.

The sources attributed the improvements largely to the increase in the cement prices which were raised last April. Such an increase was sought by the company for a long time.

The sources expected further profits and more improvements in the remaining two months of 1997.

As to exports of cement, the sources pointed out that they achieved an increase of 10.6 per cent in the first 10 months of the year compared with the same period of 1996 noting that in the first 10 months of 1997 the company exported 894,418 tonnes of cement compared to 768,242 tonnes in the same period of last year.

## REUTERS The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	JPY	CHF	HKD	SGD	THB	MYR
US Dollar	1.0000	1.7300	0.5910	140.45	125.37	1.4087	1692.00	1.9495	5.7875
DE Mark	0.5780	1.0000	0.3414	0.6117	72.48	0.6140	877.75	1.1270	3.3452
GB Sterling	1.6920	2.9290	1.0000	2.3759	214.94	2.3835	2862.88	3.2986	9.7925
CH Franc	0.7120	1.2313	0.4205	—	88.24	1.0028	1204.27	138.02	4.1192
JP Yen	0.0080	1.3794	0.4711	1.1198	—	1.1232	13.49	155.44	4.6145
CA Dollar	0.7089	1.2258	0.4178	0.9934	1.12	—	1188.50	1.3817	4.1028
IT Lira	0.0004	1.3274	0.3386	0.0030	139.82	0.0021	—	10.32	3.0195
NL Guilder	0.3130	0.8870	0.3029	0.7202	64.28	0.7222	867.47	—	2.9672
FR Franc	0.1728	0.2988	0.1021	0.24594	21.64	0.2433	33.67	33.6700	—



Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	JPY	CHF	HKD	SGD	THB	MYR
US Dollar	1.0000	1.7300	0.5910	140.45	125.37	1.4087	1692.00	1.9495	5.7875
Jordan Dinar	1.4114	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Saudi Riyal	0.2686	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bahraini Dinar	2.65	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Kuwait Dinar	2.2982	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Emirati Dinar	0.3722	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Lebanese L1000	0.65	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Egyptian	0.2950	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Mid-East Currencies									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	JPY	CHF	HKD	SGD	THB	MYR
SA Riyal	0.2686	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
AE Dirham	0.2723	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
KW Dinar	2.2982	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
BH Dinar	0.3770	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
QY Pound	1.9609	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)									
Currency	Period	Rate	Currency	Period	Rate	Currency	Period	Rate	Currency
USD	1 Month	5.56	DEM	1 Month	5.75	GBP	1 Month	5.81	JPY
GBP	3 Months	7.37	DEM	3 Months	7.55	JPY	3 Months	7.74	CHF
JPY	6 Months	0.29	CHF	6 Months	0.07	CHF	6 Months	0.19	DEM
DEM	9 Months	3.43	CHF	9 Months	3.50	DEM	9 Months	3.75	USD
CHF	12 Months	3.21	USD	12 Months	3.58	USD	12 Months	3.87	GBP
USD	1 Year	1.43	GBP	1 Year	1.75	GBP	1 Year	2.06	JPY
GBP	1 Year	6.49	JPY	1 Year	6.45	JPY	1 Year	5.59	CHF

Energy									
Commodity	Unit	Price	Commodity	Unit	Price	Commodity	Unit	Price	Commodity
Coffee (oz/s)	157	—	Spot	—	—	US Dollar	0.708	0.710	US Dollar
Cocoa (lb/s)	1646	—	Spot	—	—	GB Sterling	1.1973	1.2033	GB Sterling
Sugar (lb/s)	306.5	—	Spot	—	—	DE Mark	0.4088	0.4108	DE Mark
Wheat (lb/s)	135.7	—	Spot	—	—	CH Franc	0.5032	0.5057	CH Franc
Barley (lb/s)	0	—	Spot	—	—	NL Guilder	0.3827	0.3845	NL Guilder
Rice (lb/s)	380	—	Spot	—	—	IT Lira	0.4177	0.4198	IT Lira

Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET										
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SIRIEMANI										
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179										
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 15/11/1997										
										
PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	PAST 12 MONTHS LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF TRADED	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE
346,000	245,000	ARAB BANK	15.2	1.21	33	3460	1140745	326.00	330.50	4.50+
N 2,340	1,680	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	8	0.00	16	8350	15080	1.80	1.81	0.01+
3,600	2,760	BANK OF JORDAN	6.6	0.00	5	1750	5427	3.00	3.15	0.15+
2,680	2,150	JORDANIAN DEV. BK.	10.3	6.06	11	10981	28755	2.54	2.61	0.03+
5,200	4,600	THE HOUSING BK.	15.2	3.60	10	10709	87033	5.05	5.10	0.05+
4,380	2,200	JOR. KUPAT BANK	11.5	0.00	4	1500	3225	2.20	2.15	0.05-
1,950	740	JOR. GULF BANK	4.6	8.97	1	2000	1560	1.78	1.78	-
4,050	3,430	JOR. ZELAKO BANK	15.4	3.17	69	24219	91506	3.87	3.78	0.09-
3,900	3,080	JOR. INV. FID. BANK	24.7	0.00	2	400	1540	3.88	3.85	0.03-
1,900	870	BEIT AL-HAL (BEITAH)	6	16.85	1	500	445	89	89	-
BANK SECTOR TOTALS										
INDEX: 238.17			FCBS: +1.09	152	70239	1375315				
2,020	1,590	JOR. FRENCH INSUR.	5.3	0.02	1	1250	2338	1.85	1.87	0.02+
2,580	1,990	JORDAN GULF INSUR.	9	0.00	17	52866	129581	2.50	2.37	0.13-
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS										
INDEX: 116.65			FCBS: -0.25	18	54116	131929				
2,050	1,550	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	9.2	5.26	9	7149	13571	1.90	1.90	-
1,550	930	RAEL. PORTFOLIO	4	0.00	12	5600	6513	1.15	1.18	0.03+
1,680	1,150	NID. EAST MOTORS	20.4	0.00	10	22950	10674	3.30	3.14	0.04+
1,050	1,000	JORDAN EXPRAT. INV.	9	0.00	1	200	190	1.00	0.95	0.05-
1,100	900	ZAKKA EDUCATION	9	0.00	4	1750	1663	94	95	0.01+
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS										
INDEX: 109.70			FCBS: +0.24	36	37649	52525				
4,450	3,030	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	21.1	3.51	13	7267	22691	3.12	3.13	0.01+
11,160	9,070	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	10.4	8.28	4	410	4604	10.76	10.73	0.03-
1,410	1,050	MOULIN INDUSTRIES	10.5	8.26	2	450	553	1.19	1.21	0.02+
3,280	1,330	INDUSTRIAL COMMAR.	9	0.00	1	150	206	1.35	1.37	0.02+
4,700	3,040	ARAB FID. INVEST.	11.6	4.76	3	11500	10674	4.22	4.20	0.02-
1,700	1,020	JOR. PIPES MANUF.	18.1	6.15	4	1000	1300	1.28	1.30	0.02+
6,000	4,300	DAR ALADWA BY INV.	13.7	4.46	3	750	4213	5.65	5.60	0.05-
6,990	4,450	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	10.2	0.00	21	19250	9240	47	48	0.01+
3,690	3,250	GENERAL INVESTMENT	7.6	1.88	1	100	188	1.79	1.88	0.09+
1,230	800	ARAB PAPER CON. INV.	25.4	0.00	4	350	291	82	83	0.01+
1,200	500	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	2	1200	200	1.50	1.50	-
3,000	1,860	RAEL. CARLE WIRE. WTRC	30.5	0.00	1	200	300	1.90	1.90	-
990	530	JOR. SULPH. CHEM.	9	0.00	1	250	150	60	60	-
1,670	1,120	ARAB FID. INVEST.	16.3	5.47	7	6238	8022	1.27	1.28	0.01+
1,860	950	UNIV. NEW. IND.	22	9	8810	8774	98	99	0.01+	
1,410	800	JOR. INDUS. RESOURCES	10.8	12.50	1	100	80	80	80	-
1,620	1,300	NATL. CHLORINE	14.4	4.58	2	20000	30600	1.52	1.53	0.01+
1,070	810	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	16.1	0.00	28	51850	44930	89	88	0.01-
1,130	1,080	JOR. TOBACCO	6.7	0.00	12	49950	49959	1.19	1.22	0.03+
810	710	JORDAN STEEL	34.4	6.58	4	850	646	76	77	0.01+
840	570	MID. EAST COMPLEX	7.3	15.95	2	1150	669	60	59	0.01-
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS										
INDEX: 117.80			FCBS: +0.84	128	163075	198567				
GRAND TOTAL										
INDEX: 172.18			FCBS: +0.66	334	325079	1758327				
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 15/11/1997										
630	300	CENTRAL GEN. STORAGE	9	0.00	5	9350	2982	31	32	0.01+
610	370	JOR. TRADE FAC.	10.1	0.00	4	10900	4142	37	38	0.01+
800	660	UNION INV. SOI	9	0.00	12	29850	7164	75	74	0.01-
570	360	ARAB FID. INVEST.	9	0.00	3	11500	4600	40	40	-
N 950	720	AL-SABAK INV. CO.	1	3.00	1	300	81	81	81	-
780	610	AL-DALAMANI 75%	68.1	0.00	1	7350	3381	71	71	-
690	450	ARAB FOOD & MED.	9	0.00	5	6050	2222	45	44	0.01-
750	390	KATZ-NELLY BROS. HANICO	9	0.00	20	76600	39640	39	40	0.01+
660	580	MIDEAST FINAN. 75%	8	0.00	1	1050	399	62	63	0.01+
470	290	INDS. ENG.	9	0.00	2	4500	1350	30	30	-
820	590	NACL. FOSPHATE	8	0.00	9	15200	9272	60	61	0.01+
N 1,000	660	NEW-ALMAGANI 75%	93.2	0.00	1	500	210	66	67	0.01+
GRAND TOTAL										
				66	174850	68792				
* New 12 months low										
* Stock dividend during the past 12 months										
* Listed during the past 12 months										
* P/E ratio is 100 or more										
* Negative P/E										
* Earnings is zero or N/A for the most recent year										
										



# 13th Arab Champions Cup Wihdat face Algeria's Widad Talmasan today

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

JORDAN'S AL WIHDAT Sunday meet Algeria's Widad Talmasan in their second match at the 13th Arab Champions Cup currently underway in Tunisia.

Al Wihdat will have to beat their Algerian counterparts if they want to secure qualification to the second round after their 3-1 defeat to Saudi Arabia's Ahli Jeddah in the opening match Friday.

The Algerian team held hosts Al Afriqi of Tunisia to a 0-0 draw in the opening day's second match.

While Jordanian titleholders Al Wihdat have recently displayed an improved form with an unbeaten record in the Premier League which they currently lead halfway through, achieving an advanced standing in the championship might prove to be tough.

Playing their third Champions Cup, Al Wihdat hope to qualify to the second round of the championship which has been dominated by Saudi and Iraqi teams in 9 of the past 12 championships.

The eight team championship which concludes Nov. 23, groups Al Wihdat in Group A alongside Ahli Jeddah, Widad Talmasan of Algeria and hosts Al Afriqi.

Group B includes Al Safqasi of Tunisia, Egypt's Al Ahli, Kuwait's Kathima, and Al Ama'ri of Palestine.

The top two teams of each group will advance to the second round which starts Nov. 21 and the championship concludes Nov. 23.

Each competing team will get \$5,000 from the Arab Soccer Federation who have also covered air-fare and accommodation.

The winning team will receive \$50,000, the runner-up \$30,000, while the third and fourth finishers will split \$25,000.

This is the only the fourth time Jordanian teams take part in the Champions Cup.

Al Ahli took part in the inaugural competition in 1981 finishing last among the three competing teams. Al Faisali were the only Jordanian team to advance to the second round in 1993.

Al Hussein played in the 1993 Cup. Al Wihdat took part in 1995 and 1996.

Al Wihdat have been training under Iraqi coach Anwar Jassam. Earlier in the year, Al Wihdat also took part in the Cup Winners' Cup in Cairo and were impressive against well-known teams.

Beside their impressive league record, they recently reached the semifinals of the Jordan Cup alongside Al Hussein, Al Ramtha and Al Faisali.



Houston Rockets Charles Barkley (L) and Los Angeles Lakers Rick Fox (R) fight for a rebound during the first half of their NBA game (Reuters photo)

## Police called in as Swansea bow out

LONDON (AFP) — Police had to intervene to break up a demonstration of Swansea fans outside the directors' lounge after their team's FA Cup exit after a 4-1 home defeat against visiting Peterborough.

Swansea's latest humiliation came during a season which has seen four different managers try to lift the club up the third division — Alan Cork having followed Jan Molby, Alan Curtis and Micky Adams.

The Welsh side, who are currently just five places off the bottom of the division with only two of their 12 League games, this week placed eight first-team players on the transfer list.

Jimmy Quinn's 14th goal of the season after 28 minutes put Peterborough on the road to victory with Steve Castle adding a second six minutes later.

The visitors also scored twice in the second-half — Castle scoring a second on 70 minutes and Martin Carruthers hitting the fourth four minutes from time.

Richard Appleby scored the Swansea goal on 69 minutes, but was sent off for a second bookable offence nine minutes from time.

In Friday's other first-round Cup clash Bristol Rovers and Gillingham shared a 2-2 draw — Bristol Rovers player-manager Ian Holloway keeping his side in the competition with a last-gasp goal.

His 30-yard effort came after Ade Akinbiyi's had appeared to clinch a Gillingham victory seven minutes earlier.

Rovers had scored their first after 19 minutes through Julian Alsop but Iffy Onuora equalised just before half-time.

The teams replay Tuesday week.

## SPORTS IN BRIEF

### Ravelli sent to Tampa Bay

TAMPA (AFP) — Thomas Ravelli, the 38-year-old who has been Sweden's national team goalkeeper since 1981, was assigned to the Tampa Bay Mutiny of Major League Soccer. Ravelli is leaving perennial Swedish power IFK Gothenburg, where he has played since 1989, to join the United States club. His assignment to the Mutiny means the league will send Tampa Bay's unhappy foreigner Carlos Valderrama to the new franchise Miami Fusion, who make their debut next season. Another Swede the MLS wants to sign is forward Tomas Brodin, who has played in Italy and England.

### Hernandez in Hall of Fame

COOPERSTOWN (AFP) — Cuban defector Livan Hernandez, the World Series hero for the champion Florida Marlins, has contributed an artifact to the historic collection of the Baseball Hall of Fame. The jersey worn by Hernandez in the opening game of the series will be displayed here at the honor museum, which pays honour to the Major League Baseball championship since its inception in 1903. Hernandez was named the Most Valuable player of the series, which the Marlins won from Cleveland four games to three.

### Etcheverry extends MLS stay

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Marco Etcheverry, the Bolivian midfielder who helped D.C. United win the first two Major League Soccer season championships, has signed a contract extension with the club. The deal, believed to be worth at least \$600,000 over three years, has seen off bids by Latin American and Japanese clubs to obtain the popular 27-year-old, now on loan to FC Barcelona of Ecuador. Etcheverry scored seven goals with 30 assists and is a major attraction for the Latino fan base the league has cultivated in its two seasons. United's other Bolivian star, forward Jaime Moreno, signed a new deal in June through the 2000 season. Moreno, the MLS leading goal scorer for this year and Most Valuable Player of the final, will likely be on loan to his former team, English First Division club Middlesbrough, in January and February. United will probably lose Nigerian midfielder Ben Iroha, who is seeking a better-paying European deal. The MLS champions are also likely to decline an offer to play in China early next year.

### China wins in volleyball tourney

OSAKA (AFP) — Asian champions China shocked Olympic gold-medallists the Netherlands to score a four-set victory in the men's event of the World Grand Champions Cup volleyball tournament on Saturday. The Chinese showed an array of effective blocks and intimidating attacks to post a 15-13, 15-10, 12-15, 15-5 victory over the Olympic and European champions in one hour 54 minutes. A new rule introduced by the International Volleyball Federation came into play in this tournament for the first time, in which each set goes into the rally-point system 25 minutes after the set started. The Chinese took advantage of the new system to storm back from a 10-12 deficit in the first set after the first 25 minutes passed. Barcelona Olympic champions Brazil downed Cuba 13-15, 15-10, 15-4, 15-9, while hosts Japan outgunned Australia 15-4, 15-10, 15-3 in the six-team round robin contest at the Osaka Castle Hall.

## Premier League sign multi-million pound TV deal

LONDON (AFP) — The Premier League confirmed here on Friday that they have signed a new £100 million (\$150 million) deal for overseas television rights to Premiership games.

The three-year deal with Mark McCormack's International Management Group and Canal+ television company will begin in the 1998/99 season — they won the rights ahead of the former holders sports marketing company CSI, owned by New Zealand entrepreneur Mike Watt.

Premier league chief executive Peter Leaver said he was delighted with the deal which he sees as further evidence of the buoyancy of the English game.

"This is a very exciting development, as it reflects the growing international appeal of the Premiership," Leaver said.

"The new deal will mean additional revenue to our clubs and an expanding worldwide audience for our games. The current deal has been good for English football, and I would like to thank CSI for their work and efforts for the Premier League — it has throughout been a happy and positive association," he added.

## Fashion faux pas costs Timberwolves

NEW YORK (AFP) — The Minnesota Timberwolves were fined \$25,000 and five of their players were fined \$2,500 each on Friday for wearing shorts that violate the National Basketball Association (NBA) hemline policy.

The players fined were center Clifford Rozier, All-Star forward Kevin Garnett and guards Stephon Marbury, Chris Carr and Doug West.

The team and players were fined for failing to comply with NBA rules which say shorts worn during a game must be no lower than one inch above the top of the knee at all times.

A Timberwolves spokesman said the team was working with the NBA and Starter, the supplier of the team's uniforms, in order to comply with the rules. However, NBA Players Association executive director Billy Hunter said the union plans to appeal the players' fines.

"We intend to contest these ridiculous fines on behalf of our players to the maximum extent allowable under the terms of the collective bargaining agreement," Hunter said in a statement.

"This is part of an ongoing effort by the league to exert greater control over our players."

This season, the image-conscious NBA has tried to crack down on players' poor behavior both on the court and off. Guards Isaiah Rider of the Portland Trail Blazers and Allen Iverson of the Philadelphia 76ers both were suspended for pleading guilty to misdemeanor offenses committed during the summer.

In addition, a Players Association spokesman said the league has circulated an eight-page memo which outlines a tougher stance towards players who swear within the vicinity of TV cameras and fans.

## NBA RESULTS

Boston	103	Toronto	99
Indiana	82	Miami	78
Atlanta	104	Sacramento	103
Orlando	103	Denver	85
LA Lakers	113	Houston	103 (2nd OT)
Chicago	105	Charlotte	92
Utah	110	Seattle	104
Phoenix	140	Portland	139 (4th OT)

## Salvadorans need help to reach World Cup

FOXBORO (AFP) — El Salvador must beat the United States here on Sunday to have any hope of going to France next year for the World Cup finals.

More than half of the regular U.S. starters will not play. But even if coach Steve Sampson's already qualified United States team wins, he might be sitting at home when his players take the field in France.

Those are the unusual situations as teams prepare for their final Confederation of

North, Central and Caribbean Association Football (CONCACAF) qualifying match here on Sunday.

Unbeaten Mexico and the U.S. team, who have won three and lost just one of their nine matches have secured their places in the 32-team lineup at next year's finals in France. El Salvador has a slim hope of catching Jamaica for the final spot.

Jamaica qualifies with a win or draw on Sunday at

home against Mexico. The only way El Salvador can match them is by beating the U.S. team on its home soil, which they have not managed in seven previous attempts, and Jamaica losing.

"We're going to try to win until the very last minute," Salvadoran defender Vladan Visevic said.

El Salvador's lone triumph in 13 matches against the U.S. team was a 2-0 home victory in 1992. Four other matches ended drawn.

including a 1-1 stalemate in June in their earlier CONCACAF qualifying round match.

Sampson has benched most of his lineup to avoid injuries or possible yellow cards that could disqualify his players for the opening U.S. match in France. Young players trying to make the final squad will play on Sunday.

"We're going to make it difficult for El Salvador," Sampson vowed.

Sampson might be helm-

ing his final match for the U.S. team despite achieving the goal of reaching France with a match to spare.

U.S. Soccer President Alan Rothenberg, upset after a 1-1 home draw last month against Jamaica, has said Sampson's performance will be evaluated after Sunday.

"The players are all behind Steve," U.S. veteran Roy Wegerle said. "There shouldn't be any more speculation. He is the man to take us to the World Cup."

TODAY AT	CINEMA TEL: 634144	CINEMA TEL: 634144	CINEMA TEL: 699238	CINEMA TEL: 677420	CINEMA TEL: 6793430	CINEMA TEL: 6793430	Hisham Yanes Theatre TEL: 625155
	PHILADELPHIA "1"	PHILADELPHIA "2"	PLAZA	CONCORD	GALLERIA 1	GALLERIA 2	NOW ON DAILY
	Fran Drescher & Timothy Dalton ... in	Patrick Stewart & Jonathan Frakes ... in	Nour Al Sharif & Layla Alwi... In	Rowan Atkinson... in	ABDOUN Nour Al Sharif & Layla Alwi... in	ABDOUN	THE GOVERNMENT IN
	THE BEAUTICIAN & THE BEAST	STAR TREK FIRST CONTACT	AL MASEER (Arabic)	MR. BEAN	AL MASEER (Arabic)	ONE FINE DAY	THE SERVICE OF PEOPLE
	Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Winner in the 1997 Cannes festival Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30	Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Shows: 3:30, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30	Shows: 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	Starring Hisham Yanes and Amal Dabbas
				SLEEP WALKERS	Winner in the 1997 Cannes festival	HERCULES	For reservations call: 640155, 625155
				Shows: 3:30, 6:00 only		Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 5:00	



## England World Cup seeding fears

LONDON (AFP) — England's hopes of lifting the World Cup in France next year have been hit after FIFA warned Glenn Hoddle's side are unlikely to be seeded at France '98.

According to a report in Saturday's Mirror, Hoddle's men could face some of the world's strongest teams in the group stages because of their recent record in the tournament.

Currently ranked seventh in the world, England were hoping that victory over Cameroon at Wembley later Saturday would give them a place in the top eight nations who will be seeded next year in France.

That would see them avoid some of the favourites, such as Brazil and Germany, at the first hurdle and making qualifying for the later stages considerably easier.

A FIFA spokesman told the paper: "I don't think England will be seeded. They only have a 50-50 chance, probably less."

However Italy, who must beat Russia in Naples to qualify via the World Cup play-offs, will be seeded if they reach France because, despite being ranked 16th, they reached the final in USA '94 before losing to Brazil.

"Seeding has always been based on past performances in the World Cup, and the fact that England didn't make it to the United States in 1994 means they have only a remote chance," added the spokesman.

"Even when you look at England's world ranking position of seventh, that is only recent. In the mid-90s, they were down to 20, unlike Spain, Romania and Russia."

But with Hoddle anxious that England's current world ranking must count, the spokesman held out some hope.

He added: "We shall look at the last three years of the world rankings, and by then England were picking up. If it was just down to the previous World Cup then England wouldn't stand a chance."

## Holyfield backs off retirement talk

ATLANTA (AFP) — Evander Holyfield, who had said boxing offered him nothing else after a possible unification bout with Lennox Lewis, now hints he might hang around to meet Mike Tyson again.

Holyfield spoke of retirement last week before defeating Michael Moorer for the World Boxing Association and International Boxing Federation heavyweight titles.

Holyfield also said he almost certainly would not fight the man who hit a chunk of his ear off last June. That tactic led to Tyson being hanged from boxing for at least a year.

Now Holyfield will not rule out a third meeting with Tyson, having won by stoppage last year and by disqualification in June.

"If something is available, then why not, if I'm still in the game?" Holyfield said. "But to fight him again, it has to be that I'm just there and have nowhere else to go."

That would be the situation Holyfield faces if he defeats World Boxing Council champion Lewis of Britain, a fight rival promoters hope can be staged in April.

## Sampras beats Bjorkman to reach fifth year-end final

HANOVER (AFP) — Pete Sampras held off a determined effort from Sweden's Jonas Bjorkman on Saturday to advance to his fifth career final at the \$3.3 million ATP World Championship with a 6-3, 6-4 victory.

Sampras, the trophy holder at the season wrap-up event in 1991, 1994 and last year, spent 75 minutes and faced his only two break points of the week outside of an opening-day loss to Spaniard Carlos Moya off of the racket of the Swede.

Sampras will now face Yevgeny Kafelnikov, who came through 7-6 (7/2), 7-6 (7/3) beating Spain's Carlos Moya to reach the final at the season wrap-up event for the first time.

Bjorkman missed out on a possible chance of finishing the year on No. 2 behind Sampras. Had he advanced to the final and then won the event, the Swedish Davis Cup star would have claimed the 1997 runner-up ranking spot.

Australian Patrick Rafter will now finish No. 2 and will square off against Sampras as chief rival at the Australian Open, starting in two months.

Sampras improved his indoor mark in this year of two Grand Slam wins to 23 wins, with losses only to Richard Krajicek at Stuttgart and Moya here on Tuesday.

Bjorkman has still won the most matches of the year on the ATP Tour, 69.

The Swede started 1997 at a lowly 69th position and won the first three titles of his career along the way as he rose to No. 4 at the start of this week.

Sampras improved to 7-1 against Bjorkman, with three straight wins since losing to him on the grass of Queens last summer.

Bjorkman's resistance stiffened and he saved a



Pete Sampras of the United States hits the ball during the semi-final match against Jonas Bjorkman of Sweden at the Tennis World Championships in Hanover, November 15. Sampras won the match 6-3 6-4 (Reuters photo)

against Sampras in the opening game, which the American saved.

The breaker was the only one against Sampras apart from his opening-day loss to Carlos Moya. Neither Greg Rusedski nor Patrick Rafter, both Top Five contenders, were able to get even that far against the quasi-invincible American.

Bjorkman's resistance stiffened and he saved a

break point in the third game to hold, 1-2.

Bjorkman dropped serve when Sampras connected on an overhead smash to break for 4-2, but the Swede refused to roll over against the World No. 1.

Bjorkman saved a set point for Sampras while trailing 2-5 with a sharply angled cross-court return to win the eighth game.

Sampras collected the set in 31 minutes a game last after Bjorkman saved the first of three more set points, but then netted a backhand.

From then on, the American was in control, but Bjorkman did force him to play out the match, saving two match points before putting a return out on the third winning chance for Sampras.



Japanese soccer player Hidetoshi Nakata (R) tries to get the ball off team mate Masashi Nakayama during a final training session before Sunday's World Cup qualifying match in Johor Bahru. Japan will meet Iran in the match tomorrow (Reuters photo)

## Zamalek chase Afro-Asian record

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — Egyptian club Zamalek, African champions a record four times, adjust the sights to a new target this weekend as they prepare for a match in their Cairo base.

No team has lifted the Afro-Asian club trophy twice with Zamalek coming closest by defeating Furukawa of Japan in 1987 and finishing runners-up to Farmers Bank of Thailand three years ago.

Opponents Pohang Steelers, who host the first leg on Sunday, can also create history by emulating compatriots Daewoo Royals and Ilhwa Chunma and bringing the trophy to South Korea a third time.

South Korea, Egypt and Tunisia have been victorious twice in the annual two-leg showdown which offers no prize money, but clubs profit from television rights and gate receipts.

Ilhwa Chunma hold the cup after exposing fatal flaws in the fitness of South African side Orlando Pirates to triumph 5-0 at

home following a goalless first leg.

It is difficult to imagine another one-sided contest as Zamalek have recently regained form following a disastrous start under coach Ruud Krol, a Dutch star of the 1970s.

The Cairo club lost three consecutive away matches in the mini-league phase of the new \$3 million African Champions League and failed to reach the final.

However, convincing home victories over Club Africain of Tunisia and group winners Ohangwena of Ghana lessened criticism of the controversial coach.

Krol wielded the axe with ferocity after arriving and the victims included veteran midfielder Ahmed al-Kass, one of the greatest Africans never to be crowned Footballer of the Year.

## England clinches 2nd World Squash team title

KUALA LUMPUR (AFP) — Defending champions England defeated Canada 3-0 to clinch their second consecutive Men's World Squash Team Championships title here Saturday.

England's Simon Parke was in scintillating form against Canadian Jonathon Power who was suffering a slight back injury but was not an excuse for his humiliating loss of 0-9, 1-9 and 1-9 in just 18 minutes.

Parke said he was satisfied with his performance in the team championships, having defeated newly-crowned world individual champion Rodney Eyles from Australia on Friday and now Power.

But he was quick to add that it was "team effort and I'm glad we won."

England's Chris Walker made sure of the title when he brushed aside Waite 9-1, 9-3 and 9-4 while in the dead rubber, Del Harris defeated Ryding 9-1 and 9-1.

"Our squad strength is better than all the other teams and we knew that we had a great chance of retaining the title," he added.

## GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMAR HIRSCH

### DON'T WASTE HIGH CARDS

Neither vulnerable. North deals.

**NORTH**  
♠ K J 8 4  
♥ K 7 3  
♦ Q 10 7 3  
♣ A 4

**WEST**  
♠ 7 3  
♥ Q J 9 8  
♦ A 8 2  
♣ J 9 7 5

**EAST**  
♠ 8 2  
♥ A 8 2  
♦ 9 5 4  
♣ Q 10 8 6 2

**SOUTH**  
♠ A Q 10 9 5  
♥ 10 5 4  
♦ K J 8  
♣ K 5

The bidding:  
NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST  
1♣ Pass 1♠ Pass  
2♠ Pass 4♠ Pass  
Pass Pass

Opening lead: Queen of ♣

"Cover an honor with an honor" is one of the oldest maxims in bridge, and one of the least correct. Logic is a much better guideline to the proper play.

Four spades is a simple contract to reach. All that remains is to of hearts. The key is recognizing which is the key card in the South holding.

What are the chances that West is leading away from the ace of hearts? Virtually nil. Therefore, if

you cover the queen with the king, it is sure to lose. Not only that, a heart will be returned and the defenders will start off by cashing three heart tricks with the ace of diamonds yet to come. South will be down before entering the fray.

The important card in the South hand is the ten of hearts. Look at the difference if declarer does not cover the queen of hearts — the defense cannot continue to attack hearts profitably. If West persists with the jack, declarer covers and the ten is promoted to a trick. If West perseveres with a low heart instead, duck in dummy and either your ten will win or, if East rises with the ace, dummy's king becomes a winner.

Therefore, the defenders must abandon the heart suit. That gives declarer time to draw trumps, force out the ace of diamonds and take a heart discard on the long diamond, thereby losing only two hearts and a diamond.

As Eddie Kantar explains in his third set of Lessons: When the queen is led through K x x (x) in dummy and you have 10 x x in hand, it is usually right to play low from dummy. When you have three worthless cards in hand, play low from dummy and hope East has the ace with shortness. If so, your king will eventually become a trick.

## Senior Executive Secretary/PA

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## Sanctions to stay as long as Saddam in power — Clinton

WASHINGTON (AFP) — When President Bill Clinton said Friday that sanctions against Iraq would remain in force as long as President Saddam Hussein remains in power, he openly stated the hitherto unspoken U.S. view that Iraq's return to the international community is impossible under President Saddam.

The White House tried to downplay the words of the president Friday, claiming that when President Clinton said sanctions would not be lifted "as long as he (Saddam) lasts," he really meant that the Iraqi president appeared to have no intention of complying with U.N. resolutions, and sanctions would therefore stay in place. White House spokesman Michael McCurry said the end of President Saddam's rule "has never been listed as a condition by the United Nations Security Council" for the sanctions to be lifted.

President Clinton on Thursday expelled the U.S. members of UNSCOM — the U.N. team in charge of arms inspections in Iraq — and inspectors of other nationalities left Iraq Friday. Baghdad has accused the U.S. of spying on Iraq under the cover of the U.N. inspections team.

Iraq must prove it has complied with all U.N. resolutions passed since it

invaded Kuwait in 1990 for the international sanctions to be lifted. "We are not seeking to expand the interpretation of those resolutions at this moment," Mr. McCurry added. Although the U.S. aim as set forth by President Clinton comes as no surprise, it is the first time that a U.S. president has publicly linked a lifting of the sanctions with President Saddam's ouster. "What [Saddam] says his objective is, is to relieve the people of Iraq, and presumably the government, of the burden of the sanctions," President Clinton said.

But by expelling U.S. weapons inspectors from Baghdad, in defiance of the U.N. President Saddam has just ensured "that the sanctions will be there until the end of time, or as long as he lasts," President Clinton said in comments to reporters Friday.

Those words could be used by Baghdad to bolster its argument that the U.S. is out to get President Saddam and that it will oppose a lifting of sanctions as long as he is in power. But Mr. McCurry said the question was irrelevant. "At this point, the conditions for lifting sanctions are a moot point when it comes to Saddam Hussein," Peter Rodman, of the Nixon Centre for Peace and Freedom and a former aide to presidents Ronald

Reagan and George Bush, agreed, saying the question of when sanctions could be lifted was, at the moment, purely academic. "He [Saddam] should be in full compliance" of the U.N. resolutions, Mr. Rodman said. "Then we would have an interesting debate [in the Security Council] and maybe the U.S. would be isolated."

Judith Kipper, another Middle East expert, said she had no doubt that the U.S. would not want the sanctions lifted as long as President Saddam is there. Until Friday that view had been publicly unmentioned for U.S. officials, although many took it as a given. "Bush implied it sometimes," Mr. Rodman said. "It was never explicit." For U.S. officials the logic is simple. President Saddam would never give up his weapons of mass destruction, they say, and therefore will never be in compliance with the U.N. resolutions. "Our view has been if he does so [comply], it's hard to imagine that he would continue to be a viable authoritative political figure in Iraq," Mr. McCurry said recently.

Mr. Kipper is more direct: "Without weapons of mass destruction, he is a nobody. He is a danger only for his own people and he becomes a nobody." (see main story on page 1).



THAI OMELETTE FOR THE RECORD: Thai cooks prepare the world's biggest omelette during a fair to promote egg consumption in Chachoengsao province, 31 kilometres east of Bangkok on Saturday. Using 20,999 eggs, 1,100 cooks along with 499 assistants are hoping their monster meal will make it into the Guinness Book of World Records (AP Photo)

## Annan, EU irked by Congress' failure to approve U.N. dues

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Secretary-General Kofi Annan said on Friday the U.S. Congress' failure to approve payment of a large part of Washington's debt to the United Nations was "both unreasonable and regrettable."

At the same time, a delegation from the 15-member European Union planned to express its displeasure to American U.N. representative Bill Richardson. Ambassador Jean-Louis Wolfeld of Luxembourg, representing the EU presidency, said:

"It is both unreasonable and regrettable that the legislation was held hostage to the entirely unrelated domestic politics of abortion," Mr. Annan said in a statement.

Republican congressional leaders Thursday deleted \$926 million the Clinton administration had requested to cover U.S. back payments to the United Nations before Congress approved a foreign aid bill.

The deletion was a "quid pro quo" demanded by abortion opponents in return for earlier excision of a proposed ban on aid to some overseas population control groups.

Also cut was \$3.5 billion requested by President Bill Clinton for the International Monetary Fund.

"I am disappointed and I am concerned," Mr. Annan said, noting the setback came as the U.N. was dealing with a crisis over Iraq in which the U.N. role was "indispensable to international peace and security as well as to the vital national security interests of the United States."

He said it also happened a day after the U.N. General Assembly endorsed a major component of his programme for U.N. reforms. Congress has made reform of the world body a condition for paying a large part of the approximately \$1.3 billion that Washington owes.

He expressed gratitude to

those in the U.S. administration, the Congress and the public at large who worked tirelessly to get the dues legislation enacted.

"And I know that they, like us, are dismayed by the outcome," Mr. Annan said, pledging to continue reform efforts that he said were needed for the sake of the U.N. itself and "not to please any particular constituency."

He said the cash-strapped organisation, currently owed about \$2.2 billion in unpaid dues and for peacekeeping, would now have to take stock of its financial condition.

The Luxembourg envoy, Ambassador Wolfeld, said he and the envoys of the Netherlands and Britain, comprising the so-called EU "troika," would tell U.S. Ambassador Richardson that they "strongly deplore" Congress's action, that it would contribute to deepening the financial crisis crippling the U.N. and damage reform efforts.

He said EU members, who together account for over 35 per cent of the U.N. regular budget, always paid their dues on time and in full. The U.S., currently assessed 25 per cent of the budget, is trying to get its assessment reduced by stages to 20 per cent.

Mr. Annan said the U.N. had been borrowing from peacekeeping funds to pay its bills, but this practice was imprudent at best.

"Because U.S. arrears payments have not been legislated in the expected amount, I cannot assure the prospect of repayment to those member states who have supplied troops and provided material for peacekeeping missions — many of which are developing countries."

He said he was asking for the urgent convening of a high-level General Assembly group on finance to explore options for ensuring prompt payment by members of their dues.

## Palestinian negotiator resigns in protest at Israeli policies

GAZA CITY (AFP) — A security negotiator in talks with Israel has resigned in protest at Israel's stance in the peace process, the Al Hayat Al Jadideh newspaper reported Saturday.

Sources at the office of Mohammad Dahlan, who is also the head of Palestinian Preventive Security in Gaza, confirmed the news but would not elaborate.

"I cannot take it any longer, the way Israel stalls the peace process," the

newspaper quoted Mr. Dahlan as saying. "I am protesting the Israeli policies toward negotiations and its stalling of the peace talks."

The peace process has been stuck over an Israeli refusal to halt settlement construction and to withdraw troops from Palestinian areas.

"The Palestinians still refuse to resume security cooperation to its previous level without first solving

the political aspect of the talks," Mr. Dahlan said.

Several Palestinian negotiators have threatened to resign in protest at the Israeli policies but have not followed through.

Mr. Dahlan urged the Palestinians "to be patient" in the negotiations.

"Either there will be comprehensive war or there will be comprehensive peace but the Palestinian side will continue to advance the peace," Mr. Dahlan said.

## Palestinian boy shot by Israeli soldier declared clinically dead

BETHLEHEM (R) — A Palestinian boy shot in the head by an Israeli soldier earlier this week was declared clinically dead on Saturday and his family said it would have his kidney transplanted to his ill sister.

"He is dead and we are preparing for his funeral. His five-year-old sister needs a kidney and we asked the hospital to transplant his kidney into his little sister," the boy's aunt, Naveen Jawareesh, told Reuters.

It is unclear if other organs will be donated. Ali Jawareesh, 7, was

watching a Jewish celebration from his uncle's house near Rachel's Tomb on Tuesday in the West Bank town of Bethlehem when Israeli soldiers shot him with live ammunition, relatives said.

Palestinian police officials said three to four boys had thrown stones at soldiers from a distance of about 200 metres away when the army opened fire.

"What crime did he commit to be shot like this? He was only seven-years-old and he wasn't a threat to the soldiers," the boy's aunt said.

Israeli military sources said shots were fired only after Palestinian National Authority police had ignored a demand by Israeli commanders they step in to halt the unrest.

The Israeli army, which also fires rubber bullets, denied using live ammunition to disperse stone throwers.

Israel banded over parts of the West Bank to Palestinian rule under peace deals reached since 1993 but Israeli troops still occupy much of the area.

## Turkish police find bomb where Yilmaz was due to speak

ANKARA (AFP) — Turkish police on Saturday found a bomb at a site where Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz was shortly to speak, a cabinet minister told the Anatolian news agency.

"Police discovered a bomb in a box placed in an area where Yilmaz was to make a public speech" in the town of Arakli, near the Black Sea port of Trabzon, Eyup Asik, state minister for economic affairs, told the agency.

"The bomb was then detonated in a controlled way," Mr. Asik said. He did not say who might be responsible.

Mr. Yilmaz was due to attend a public ceremony Saturday marking the construction of a highway passing through Arakli.

The prime minister took over from Islamist former Premier Necmettin Erbakan in June and leads a three-party right-left coalition government.

Mr. Yilmaz had a troubled flight from Istanbul to Trabzon Saturday. His plane had to return to Istanbul shortly after it took off as the cabin pressure dropped considerably for an unknown reason, Anatolian said.

The premier then proceeded to Trabzon aboard another plane, the agency said.

## Russia challenging West with advanced Sukhoi at UAE show

DUBAI (AFP) — Russia is bringing its latest Sukhoi fighter to an international air show in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in a bid to grab a share of the lucrative Western-dominated Gulf arms market.

The Sukhoi 37, the latest version in the Sukhoi series, will be displayed for the first time in the Middle East during the Nov. 16-20 show in Dubai against sophisticated British, French and U.S. jets.

Organisers said the Sukhoi would be the "star" of the daily demonstrations after it snatched arms makers during acrobatic flights in Britain last year. Some of them said the plane made 70 per cent of other jets out of date.

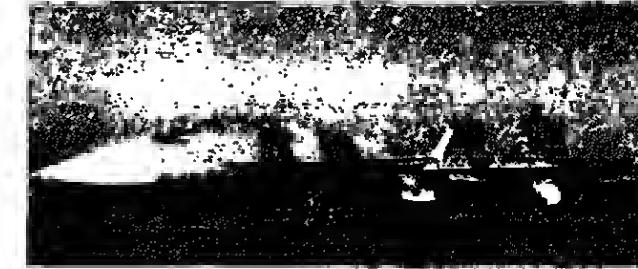
"The Russians are exhibiting their latest aircraft technology. They seem determined to impress the people here," a Dubai defence source said.

The Russians, whose presence in the Gulf Arab countries' arms market has been small, impressed onlookers with their daily flight demonstrations by their Sukhoi 35 during the 1995 air show in Dubai.

But they obviously failed to create the same impression within the defence procurement institutions in the oil-rich region.

In what would be one of the biggest jet deals in the region, the UAE has ordered nearly 80 aircraft worth up to \$6 billion. Russia had eyed that package but only Britain, France and the U.S. were shortlisted.

Russia has said it is ready to sell any of its aircraft to any country as the former Soviet Republic is thirsty for cash to finance its transformation from socialism into a market economy. "The Russians have



advanced and competitive military industry, but the problem is that they lack the logistic, technical and training facilities which Gulf Arab states are getting from the West," a Western military expert said.

"Another important factor is that Gulf states rely almost completely on Western weapons, and it would be difficult for them to achieve coordination among their air forces if they heavily diversified their arms supply sources."

Diplomats said Britain, France and the U.S. also had an edge over other weapons producers because they are linked in defence pacts with the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and play a decisive role in ejecting Iraqi invasion forces from Kuwait in February 1991.

Apart from the Sukhoi 37, Russia is exhibiting its MiGs and helicopters at the Dubai show while France will bring its Mirages and Rafales.

The U.S. is showing its well-known F-16 fighter and Apache helicopters while the British jets include Hawks and Tornados.

A prototype of the Eurofighter will also be on display. The plane, built by a British-led consortium, is pitted against the Rafale and the F-16 in the UAE's jet deal which is expected to be announced in the next few months.

The four countries account for a quarter of the nearly 500 companies from 31 countries participating in the fifth biennial Dubai air show, which also includes Boeings, Airbus and other civilian aircraft.

The organisers, Fairs and Exhibitions of London, said they had invited nearly 60 defence ministers and more than 20,000 military delegates, including officials from Iran and other countries involved in bolstering their armies.

Experts said Gulf states, which control around 45 per cent of the world's oil, had emerged as the world's biggest defence spenders in comparison with their gross domestic products since they embarked on massive armament programmes following the 1990 Iraqi invasion of neighbouring Kuwait.

Arab League figures showed GCC states — Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE — have allocated nearly \$195 billion for defence since 1991. Billions more are expected to be spent until 2000.

Besides the military sector, Arab airlines will have to buy more than 700 civilian aircraft worth nearly \$435 billion in the next 20 years to modernise their ageing fleets, according to Airbus estimates.



'Everything must go' at the George V

PARIS (R) — The George V Hotel, one of the grandest in Paris, turned into a giant display of bric-a-brac as its contents went on public display before going under the hammer. Greta Garbo, the Beatles, General Dwight Eisenhower, Buster Keaton, Michael Jackson, Duke Ellington and Luciano Pavarotti were among famous guests of the 70-year-old hotel. Everything from the furniture and the wine cellars down to the last ashtray will be sold as a new Saudi owner sets out to renovate the 298-room hotel from top to bottom.

## French rappers fined for call to kill 'chickens'

PARIS (R) — A French court fined two rap singers a total \$16,000 for advocating the killing of policemen. Elie Ebella and Gilles Duarte were found guilty of incitement to murder public officials in media interviews and their song "sacrifice de poulets" — "chicken sacrifice." Poulet (chicken) is slang for police. The singers were also ordered to pay \$14,000 in damages to three police unions which took them to court. Three-month prison sentences passed on two other rap singers this year for reviling police in their lyrics triggered fierce debate over censorship and respect for public officials.

## Garden Gnomes Liberation Front busted

LILLE (R) — Four French students who stole ornamental garden gnomes from gardens in northeast France over several months ran into a judge who didn't appreciate the joke. Magistrate Bernard Lemaire sentenced the unnamed ring-leader of the Garden Gnomes Liberation Front to two months jail — suspended — and a \$500 fine. Two other students drew one-month suspended terms and the fourth lost his driving licence for four months. They also had to reimburse the owners, court sources said.

## Comic hero Desperate Dan retires

LONDON (AFP) — One of Britain's favourite cartoon characters, cowboy Desperate Dan, is hanging up his Stetson after 60 years as the symbol of children's comic The Dandy. The Canisville cowpoke, famous for his passion for cow pie complete with horns, is the only character never to have missed an issue of the Dandy. Now publishers D C Thomson are looking for a hero to fill Dan's boots. A spokesman said: "Cowpoke Desperate Dan has been a number one favourite for 60 years and we are devastated at this loss. But Dan's set his heart on headin' for them. Now we're desperately looking for someone to fill Dan's boots."

## Mexico denies visa to Cubans who planned voodoo demonstration

CANCUN (AFP) — Apparently under pressure from Roman Catholic officials, Mexico denied a visa to two Cuban voodoo priests who planned to put on a demonstration at a Caribbean cultural gathering. Alexis Alarcon, the leader of a Cuban delegation that planned to attend the festival, said: "We respect the decisions of the Mexican government [but] we wanted to show something not just of people who practice voodoo, but also of santeria, as part of our culture." Santeria is a blend of beliefs of Afro-Caribbean and Roman Catholic origin.